

Honoring Fathers Matthew 3:16-17

From a Christian perspective is it important to honor our fathers.
Deuteronomy 5:16 – *Honor your father and your mother...*

In OT times, the father commanded a high position in the family; his word was law. The Hebrew word translated *husband* means “lord,” “master,” “owner,” or “possessor” (Gen. 18:12; Hos. 2:16). Because of his position, shared to some degree with his wife, a man expected to be treated as royalty by the rest of his family. The fifth commandment carries this idea of the importance of the parents one step further when it states, “Honor your father and your mother” (Exodus 20:12). The word “honor” often refers to one’s response to God. In other words, this commandment suggests that the parents should receive a recognition like that given to God.

How to Honor Your Father

How do we "honor" our fathers, as God intends?

1. Children and Teens - Obey

For children and teens, honor is closely tied to obedience. "Obedience," is not only outward compliance – doing as one is told, following the rules of the household – but even more important, *it is a heart attitude of submission to one’s father, a willing acceptance of his authority.* Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20

A Father’s Attitude

Fathers are not to rule their households as tyrants. Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21
Fathers are to instruct and discipline their children with patience, kindness, and gentleness. It is easy to break a child’s spirit by being too harsh or too critical, or by treating him or her with anger and contempt. It is not OK to vent our frustrations on our kids. Yes, we need to be firm, but we also need to speak and act in love; to treat our children as we would want to be treated in their place.

Asking for Forgiveness

Have you ever apologized to one of your kids? Have you ever realized, after the fact, that you punished them unfairly, or too severely – and have you then gone to them to ask forgiveness?
Apologizing does not undermine your authority. A willingness to admit mistakes is a sign of strength, not a sign of weakness. Apologizing does not mean you are weak on discipline, nor that you don’t expect respect.
Proverbs 19:17
Fathers, be careful how you exercise authority.

2. Respect and Value His Advice

Sons and daughters can honor their father by showing that they respect and value his advice. (This includes adult children.) As adult children, you are no longer under your father’s authority, but you honor him by listening to him and by seeking his advice. You will soon see that he has accumulated wisdom.
In the book of Proverbs, we have several admonitions for children to give heed to their parents’ instruction.
Proverbs 4:1-2; Proverbs 13:1

Fathers Are to Instruct, Teach

If children are to honor their father by giving heed to his instruction, then fathers need to *instruct and teach. To pass on what he’s learned.*
The church can help in her Christian education, but it is the parents, especially the father’s responsibility to instruct their children in what it means to be a Christian. Deuteronomy 6:6-9

Types of Instruction

Fathers need to be instructing their children in the faith. They do this both formally and informally. Informally, fathers should always be seeking opportunities to relate life experiences, their own and their children's, to the word of God. You can't be heavy-handed about this, or you'll turn them off. But be on the alert for that "teachable moment," when they might be receptive to hearing what God has to say about their situation. Teaching is something that should happen wherever you are, and whatever you're doing.

Formally, we need to revive the idea of the "family altar". It's a time when the family gathers, once a day, for Bible reading and prayer. Take 15 or 20 minutes each day for this. Read a passage from the Bible, talk about it, have everyone see the passage. If questions are asked that you are unsure of the answer, admit you don't know, but also determine yourself that you will find the answer.

Maintaining the family altar takes commitment, but also flexibility and some realistic expectations, especially with busy lifestyles. The reward, of children who bring honor to their parents by walking with God, is worth every ounce of effort. Proverbs 22:6; 23:24.

These wise sayings from Proverbs are not promises; they are general truths. Children who are taught with wisdom, and who are lovingly and consistently disciplined, will turn out well. That brings great joy to their father. Fathers, the instruction of our children is not something we can leave to chance. Nor is it something we can delegate to someone else and then forget about. It is vitally important, and it deserves all the thought, and planning, and prayer, and labor that we can possibly give it.

Fathers Know the Word

Fathers, you are responsible to teach your children, but you can't pass on what you don't possess. If you don't possess wisdom and knowledge, you can't pass it on. For you to be a faithful and effective instructor of your children, you must yourself be a student of God's Word, and put it into practice in your own life.

Fathers, if you are not in the Word, it is never too late.

Blessing Our Children

Matthew 3:16-17 God the Father blessed His Son, Jesus Christ, at His baptism. God is our model for fatherhood. God not only tells Jesus that he's pleased with Him; he announces it to the whole world.

Fathers, if you are proud of your sons and daughters, *tell them*. For some reason, this is hard for fathers to do, but a father's blessing has incredible power in the lives of his children. Give your children your blessing. Tell them how proud you are of them. Don't send them out into the world without that suit of armor. If they've already gone, make sure you tell them as soon as you can. If you do, you'll find that they've been waiting for those words a long, long time.

Praying for Your Children

Children need their fathers to pray for them. Pray for many things concerning your children, but most of all, pray that God would draw them to Himself in salvation; that He would make Himself real to them, that He would be a constant and abiding presence in their lives. Pray that they would come to know Him as their Father in heaven.

Conclusion

Psalm 127:3-5 reminds us that despite all the work, and expense, and worry, and heartache, and aggravation, and sheer messiness that children bring into our lives, and even though the job of father often seems thankless and pointless and endless; nevertheless, our sons and daughters are a great gift and a tremendous blessing from the Lord. Let's remember that, on Father's Day and every day.