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Last But Not The Least Bible and Parenting

In many ways, it is impossible for men to think like God and improbable for them to justify that the Heavenly Father would act in a particular way. Even so, it is possible to come to certain conclusions, based on references given in the Bible, about how our God sees us- like a Father who looks upon His children.

Parenting is a topic that is in the center of focus in many parts of the Scriptures, and it was so because parents had the duty to bring up children as true Christians. The Scripture says that the parent who “spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him” (Proverbs 13:24). Clearly, the message of discipline is strong here. Proverbs 19:18 might answer why this strong message is necessary to parents. “Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death.” Solomon wrote, “Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; he will also give delight to your soul” (Proverbs 29:17). The Scriptures might be bearing down on the parents the necessity of being a ‘present’ parent to their children for it is required for both the children to have hope and the parents to have comfort and delight in their soul. Some of the ways of teaching the child to grow up in the love of God is to teach them to build a genuine conversation with Christ, help the child grow in godliness, and train the child to take on life’s responsibilities. They need to learn how to resolve conflicts God’s way, as opposed to the world’s way (Eph. 4:25-32; 1 Pet. 3:8-12). “He who fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for his children, it will be a refuge” (Proverbs 14:26).

The role of the parents is prominent in being righteous in their skin too. Proverbs 20: 7 goes “The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him.” This provides the parents with the duty to be role models for their children- a righteous parent who is just and tries to lead a life free of guilt and remorse. This does not necessarily mean that the parent is to be distant and be cynical about the faults of their children. The Scriptures continues with a message to the parents to “not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged” (Colossians 3:21). To relate to God in a father-child relationship helps us to think about various questions in life: “does my Father love me in spite of my shortcomings?”, “would He not forgive me for my weakness and teach me correctly the way I should take?” Sitting down with the child and with compassion, being with the child through their trials can bear abundant fruits. “As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him” (Psalm 103:13). Talk to the child about your life and set examples of what you had done or would have done in situations, and give the freedom to the child to see the fruits of being a Christian and follow the example.

Jesus Christ is the best example of how anyone should live their life. If the kids watch their parents love God with all their heart, meditating on His word daily and seeking His guidance through hard times, the children will be more likely to catch on to this love (Deuteronomy 6: 4- 9). Loving the neighbors is a tougher model to show than showing love to the Lord. It doesn't imply that there can be perfect parents or perfection is the goal of parenting. It only implies that there is a God and we are but humble travelers in His plan for a greater purpose. It implies that we all are humble before Him, confessing our shortcomings, and seeking for forgiveness when we do not meet His expectations.

Hence being diligent in our duties with grace and love should be defining characteristics of our life. In many places, God is described as a loving and gracious Father who punishes the sinners. God is having a fine balance between His just nature and His punishing. Punishing out of anger and embarrassment can be considered a sin but punishing after explaining the reason behind the disciplining process can be more purposive. The children are asked to “obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord” (Colossians 3:20). Parenting is a team work, and when one party in the team falls behind in their duties, the smooth running of the family is disrupted.

The Father expects nothing less than a true belief that He is the Alpha and the Omega- the Beginning and the End (Revelation 21: 6). Every home needs to be built on the rock of the Lord or else the “labor is in vain that built it” (Psalm 127: 1). Above all, the message to all parents is seen in Deuteronomy 6:5-8 - "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads." Knowing that God is a loving Father and loves his children very much is beginning to a relationship that teaches us to give assurance to the children and sing - “We Are Not Alone, For God Is With Us” (Choplin, 2005).

Kahil Gibran wrote,
“Your children are not your children
They are the sons and daughters of life’s longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.”

Let it bear in our minds that parents are stewards responsible for accompanying them in their trials and tribulations.