

Fathers Who Blessed Their Homes

If you would like a fairly tough assignment, look through the pages of God's word and try to find examples of dads who honored God's will and consistently blessed their homes – there aren't many! Why is this? A few reasons come to mind. First, it may well be the case that the world has not often seen fathers who blessed their homes spiritually – if it were easy, more would do it (cf. Deut. 6:4-9). Second, one seemingly small or unimportant decision by a father might have world-changing repercussions because of the position in which God has placed him, and the Bible often goes to great lengths to point out the consequences of those decisions. Thus, while there are undoubtedly many things that righteous men like Isaac and David did right as fathers, their sins in showing favoritism or in committing adultery sowed some bitter seeds that yielded ungodly fruit in their families for years to come. Third, while biographies of "good" dads might be in somewhat short supply, the Scriptures are still replete with principles and commandments for every father, and ultimately, each of us must give account of himself to God (cf. Eph. 6:4; 1 Tim. 3:4-5). Though no man is perfect (Rom. 3:23), let us consider some Bible fathers who blessed their homes:

Noah – "Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:9). The lesson Noah teaches is that fathers can tremendously bless their families by being willing to go against the grain of worldliness. God looked down upon the earth, and it seems that Noah was the only person God could find who was interested in walking with Him (cf. Gen. 6:5-8). When a man makes up his mind that he is going to steadfastly walk with God, he may well be saving his family unknowingly.

Job – "Job was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil" (Job 1:1). As a father, Job regularly rose early in the morning to offer sacrifices on behalf of his family, saying, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts" (Job 1:5). How the world needs more dads like Job who are not only deeply concerned about but willing to DO something about the spiritual welfare of their children!

Joseph – Few in history have suffered more for righteousness' sake than Joseph. Sold into slavery by his jealous brothers and later imprisoned because he would not yield to the temptation of his master's wife, Joseph languished for years in a prison not of his making. Some would be bitter because of all this, but Joseph realized the implications of bitterness for himself and for his family. After his release from prison and exaltation to be a ruler in Egypt, Joseph named his first son "Manasseh," which means, "forget," because, "God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house" (Gen. 41:51). His second son he named, "Ephraim," which means, "fruitful," because, "God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction" (Gen. 41:52). Joseph chose forgiveness and blessing instead of bitterness and anger, and his family was undoubtedly blessed because of it (cf. Eph. 4:31-32).

Philip the Evangelist – Perhaps the greatest example of a father in the New Testament is Philip the Evangelist. In Acts 21:9 we read, “Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.” Notice what this short statement indicates about Philip as a father. First, although he was an evangelist, he had also invested enough time at home to save his own family. Further, he encouraged his children to be involved in the Lord’s work. His daughters would not have prophesied in the assembly (cf. 1 Tim. 2:11-12), but there were many other areas of work where they could bless others by using their spiritual gifts. The passage also reveals that Philip had guided his daughters to maintain moral purity. Where are the fathers that will teach and guide their children like Philip the Evangelist today?

Thank God for dads who take their responsibility seriously. May their tribe increase.

-- JB