

What Will Your Children Remember?

by Lowell Blasingame

The Psalmist said that a man's children are "a heritage of the Lord," (Psa. 127:4). Most admit that there is something badly wrong with parents who do not love and value their children as such.

Parental love motivates us to be concerned about our children's welfare and seek what is best for them. We try to train them to eat properly so they will develop strong healthy bodies. We warn and advise against dangers of which they are not aware. We make decisions for them until we think they are mature enough to make their own.

Unfortunately, parents often fail their children in the most important area of all in life - the need for seeking first the kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33). I once visited with a father and tried to impress upon him this need. His response to me was that when he was a child his mother made him get up on Sundays and go to the little church in the community where they lived and he made up his mind then that when he became a man of his own, that he wouldn't go until he wanted to go. This man later in life came to recognize that need and obeyed the gospel but his son, who was in his formative years when I talked with his father and needed a father's example, didn't get such then and today is not a Christian. Fathers are admonished to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," (Eph. 6:4). Timothy's unfeigned faith is attributed to the example of a godly mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5). On the other hand, of Ahaziah it is said, "For his mother was his counselor to do wickedly" (2 Chron. 22:3).

Jeremiah made an observation about his generation that its sin was written with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond upon the table of their heart and horns of their altars, "Whilst their children remember their altars and their grooves by the green trees upon the high hills," (Jer. 17:1-2). Judah's example was imprinting the future of their children - it was being decided by what they remembered from the example of their forefathers.

Statistics recently released from a study made reveal the tremendous impact of parental example in the lives of their children. It was learned that children growing up in homes whose parents actively participated in the work of the local congregation had a tendency to be more active in the work of the congregation when they became adults than those whose parents manifest little or no interest in the work of the church. In fact, very rarely did parents who spasmodically attended and took no part in the work of the congregation have children to become active members when they became adults. They exhibited the same undependable traits that their parents did.

I can conceive of nothing more heart rending than for one seeing his child condemned in the day of judgment and know that he had influenced his child in the wrong way.

Jeremiah said that Judah's children would remember her altars and groves. His point was that their idolatry would influence their children to serve idols and incur the wrath of Jehovah and that they were partially responsible for it by their examples.

What will your children remember? Will it be that you never obeyed the gospel, or that you turned back and ceased to serve the Lord, or that you constantly complained and found fault with your brethren in the Lord? Will they remember that you could sit on a backless bleacher for a two to three hour ballgame or in a boat fishing, but that an hour on a bench in the church building had your back killing you? Will they remember that you skipped services when kinfolks came, or for a golf tournament, or for the opening day of deer season? Will they remember that you bought the best with which to golf, hunt or fish, that the price of gasoline, motels and food never kept you from Mountain View, Pigeon Forge or the beach, but you never could drive fifty or a hundred miles to worship with brethren and encourage them in a gospel meeting? Will they remember that you were always early for the movie, first at the picnic and in the stands before the first pitch of the ball game, but that you never seemed to be able to get to worship services before the singing had started?

Remembering you will be a major factor in imprinting the lives of your children and grandchildren, is this what you want?

"Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid" (1 Tim. 5:24-25).