

## How Can I Be The Leader in My Family?

“So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one” (Ezek. 22:30)

How can a society deteriorate to where “a man” is not only an endangered species, but is altogether extinct? When Jehovah scanned the human landscape of Israel, He found prophets who were of no benefit to the people, but rather they were like a lion tearing prey. They spoke lies and perpetuated falsehoods in the name of God. He also found priests who were profane and could not distinguish between holy and unholy things—they even hid their eyes from the Sabbath-day’s duty. When Jehovah looked at the rulers, He saw much of the same—men as wolves, tearing their prey to get personal gain. When He looked at people, He saw oppressors, robbers, as well as a people who abused the poor (Ezek. 22:23-29). Jehovah found all kinds of sin and sinners, but could not find a real man in the prophets, priests, rulers, or the populace. How could this be? Fundamentally, men had stopped leading their children in paths of righteousness; righteousness continued to shrink away from the people and sin, like a cancerous tumor, continued to grow.

We should recognize the sobering thought that our children will inherit everything we have. They will inherit our world, our trades, our positions, our name, and our reputation. Everything we have, every position of authority, every skill will be turned over to the next generation. What then of our faith? Will a time come when Jehovah scans the American landscape and will have no success in finding a man who will stand in the gap before the land? If fathers fail to lead families, such can easily happen, *even in one single generation*.

“Children’s children are the crown of old men, and the glory of children is their father” (Prov. 17:6). God designed man for glory. He created him to represent the glory of God on earth. “For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man” (1 Cor. 11:7). Unlike “Hollywood’s” depiction of man as a weak, confused, sex-crazed, imbecilic covenant-breaker, the “Holy Word” identifies man as the “glory of God.” Nothing Jehovah created on earth has greater glory than man. Hence the Creator expects the man to be the leader of his tribe.

So, “How can I be the leader in my family as God wants?” If you are a father and reading this article, please note carefully that no one else is given the unique role of leading your family *except you*. Should a man fail that responsibility, he has failed a very large part of his reason for living and having a family (see Mal. 2:15).

**A. The man can lead his family by developing a sound work-ethic.** We live in a time where laziness seems to be rewarded in certain circles. But true success of any man cannot come without a good work-ethic. God built within us the ability to “rule” and “tend” (Gen. 1:28; 2:15). Hence we were created to work. Solomon stated it this way, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might...” (Eccl. 9:10). The man teaches his sons and daughters in developing this

quality when he first lives it. Further, the father should place a burden of responsibility and accountability on his children when they are of age to bear it (Lam. 3:27-29). From Jeremiah's tear-stained lamentation, we can see a ray of hope when the youth are made to bear a *yoke*. Besides learning responsibility, such enables them to learn the important trait of *endurance* in suffering and adversity which will only help them in the more difficult years that lie ahead. What will the youth do when in life's earthquakes they have only lived on Easy Street? A generation without a work-ethic only creates a hole for the family, society, and the church (1 Tim. 5:8).

**B. The man can lead his family in educational endeavors.** Children should receive an education that makes them fit for work, life, and God. Perusing the first seven chapters of Proverbs gives us an example of a father imparting secular, spiritual, and sensible knowledge. He addresses peer pressure, seeking God's wisdom, honoring the Lord with wealth, avoiding human traps of wicked men and seducing women, retaining calm during times of terror, sound business practices, sexual advice, peril of envy, and the danger of debt. Fathers can lead their families in attaining a sound education by teaching the things Solomon taught in the book of Proverbs. Make no mistake; the education which our children receive is something which we are going to be held accountable for. We should be actively engaged with what our children are learning as such will either bring joy or grief in later years. The Scriptures teach that both parents should be actively involved in training their children; God, however, places the oversight and accountability of it on the father. "The living, the living man, he shall praise You, As I do this day; The father shall make known Your truth to the children" (Is. 38:19; cf. Ps. 78:3-8; Eph. 6:4; etc.).

**C. The man can lead his family in providing discipline to his children.** With education comes *application* and *discipline*. Discipline is a friend to education and without such, education is merely academic. "The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother...Correct your son, and he will give you rest; Yes, he will give delight to your soul" (Prov. 29:15, 17). The rod coupled with rebuke imparts wisdom. Both are needed. The permissive father is actually a curse to his children (1 Sam. 3:13).

There is a time when children are pliable and teachable. When that time is spurned by parents, a great evil has been done—*a child left to himself brings shame on his mother*. "Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction" (Prov. 19:18). The idea is that a worse penalty is going to come upon those who do not learn from the temporary chastening in the home. Likewise, it should weigh heavily upon the father's mind how long his children are left alone without parental influence, example and training. Some parents rarely invest time with their children. They spend it on the pursuit of riches and entertainment, on various and vain "activities" and "things" which clutter up life. In its wake exists not only a strained relationship between the husband and wife, but also with the children. Sadly, these young souls are growing up with essentially other people and activities raising them. As a father, how much time do you spend with your children each day and week?

**D. The man can lead his family in a spiritual walk.** Fundamentally, man is to lead his family to God; he is God's representative on earth. God spoke of Abraham, "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of

the LORD..." (Gen. 18:19). Abraham is an example of a man who was lacking in Israel in the time of Ezekiel 22:30. Abraham was one who sought to lead his family in the way of the Lord. He did not shirk his responsibility to Sarah, but rather fulfilled it. Here are some ways that men can be leaders of their family in walking today:

1. Having good conduct (1 Tim. 3:2).
2. Teaching the commandments and ways of God to their children (1 Tim. 3:2; Eph. 6:4; etc.)
3. Taking the oversight in ruling his house (1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12). Passing this *rule* on the wife is sinful. Can he control his house? The man who stands in the gap is a man who *rules his house well*.
4. Leading the family in prayer (1 Tim. 2:8). Children learn to communicate with God by observing their father. If he is a man of prayer, they can learn to trust God. If he rarely prays or if it seems superficial, then they will also neglect this blessing. All the great men in Scripture have in common that they were men of prayer.
5. Bringing the family to worship. It seems that it is a temptation for tired fathers to neglect worship. This sows seeds of inconsistency when children see their father active in secular pursuits, but too tired for worship. The man who stands in the gap will be like Joshua, "...But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh. 24:15).

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<sup>1</sup> All verses are from the New King James Version.