

What Was That?

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Last week, I was at a local Laundromat drying clothes. Inside, there was a father and his three children. The oldest, a boy, looked to be about 6 years old and the youngest, a girl, looked to be just around 2. The children were being loud and running over the place and at first I didn't think dad even paid attention. Then I saw him move to correct the children, and thought, I'm glad he's watching after all. What he said caused me to ponder "What was that?" and my thought was confirmed when he continued to curse and ridicule his children. Anywhere he could have substituted an expletive, he did. I am not suggesting by any means that the children should not have been corrected. Unfortunately the issues did not stop there. He instructed the oldest to make sure the other two sat in the seat and not go pass him. Five minutes later the youngest hopped down and when the oldest tried to stop her she ran underneath him. The father cursed more at the son and ridiculed him. Told the child he can forget playing football if a "little girl" could get pass him. The oldest sobbed more and more as dad pressed it further. My biggest fear, if this is what it is like in public, is it worse at home? It was one of those situations where I felt as if I spoke up, the children would only get it worse. I'd experienced similar as a public librarian. This long introduction though is to set the picture for you, as there are some points I wish to make.

First, God created the family. He made humans both male and female. God designed the bond of marriage to be sacred. (Hebrews 13:4) God designed the family in man and woman clinging to each other and becoming one flesh. God designed the creation of new life between a man and woman. Children are a gift from God. There are many in this world who would want nothing more than to have a child to love and cherish, and then there are those who throw their own away or simply do not treat them as they should.

Second, discipline is needed. In this situation, the children absolutely needed to be disciplined. Proverbs 13:24 says "Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him." If we lived in a world without discipline for actions, everything would be in utter chaos. Godly discipline has good-fruit. It teaches and instructs the child on how to behave.

Unfortunately, and thirdly, ungodly discipline has the adverse reaction. No discipline should

contradict the Word of God. Sometimes parents do not spank a child they unfortunately abuse them. Cursing should never be a part of discipline. It is nothing more than a bad example and wrong. Ephesians 6:4, Paul admonishes "Father, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Paul echoes this to the church at Colossae, Colossians 3:21 — "Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged." There is great danger to not only the parent but to the child in ungodly discipline.

Fourthly, and apart from the other ideas, look at the image he displayed. Even giving the father the benefit of the doubt, if it was a bad day, the image he portrayed was horrifying. The way he loudly and openly scolded and criticized his children tainted the image I had of him and possibly the others there. No matter what has happened, we must continually show ourselves to be proper people. I do not know his religious beliefs, but we as Christians represent God. If I was that father and you saw me, and I came to you another time (you remember me) and invited me to church services, would you be willing to come?

Finally, and the most heartbreaking to me, is what is he teaching his children? Proverbs 22:6 states, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." If this father teaches his children the following: cursing is okay, bullying is fine (Belittling the son because a "little girl" got past him), portraying yourself in a bad manner is okay, lack of respect, etc. How will they grow up? Children learn by example. My prayer is not only for this father that he might not act this way, but that the children will not imitate his behavior on this day with their own.

God designed the family. He gave husbands to be the head of the home. They are to lead their family in the right path. The husband and wife is to be one unit, bringing up the children in the right manner. He is to not provoke his children and is to love the wife as Christ loved the church. The Godly mother is to teach her children. She is to be a help to her husband, working together as God designed. The children are to obey their parents and honor them.

Children sometimes do not realize the blessing of good parents until they see someone who does not have those type of parents. Honoring parents is more than just in adolescence, it is also throughout life. My prayer is for our young families here to imitate the examples given in Scriptures. May we all pray for them and their children as well as others we know. There is a shortage of Godly parents, and that's the saddest point of all. —**CW**