**The Three Greatest Gifts a Father Can Give His Children**

At His very core, His *essence* if you will, God is *love,* 1John 4:7-8,16. To be the kind of *fathers* God expects us to be, we must follow His example of love, 1John 3:1. Let’s look at what I consider to be (take that for whatever you think its worth!) the three greatest gifts we fathers can give/leave our children…

**An Example of Leadership- Loving God, Gen.18:16-19; 26:1-5.**

* Abraham loved Sarah, but loved God more, Gen.23:2; 12:1-5. He tenderly mourned for her, and eventually bought a field, its trees, and its cave for a burial place for her. But when God had said, *“Go forth from your country, and from your relatives,”* he didn’t hesitate to take her away from her family, around the Arabian desert, to a place they had never seen, and to live the rest of her life in a land they would never own… because God said so. He love Sarah dearly, but Abraham loved God more. So, he led her to the Promised Land.
* He loved Isaac, the son of promise and of his old age for whom he’d waited 25 years (cp. Gen.12:4; 21:5), but he loved God more, Gen.22:1-12. As much as son born out of due time could be loved and cherished by aged father, Abraham loved and cherished his *“son of promise.”* But, not even that beloved son’s life was more important to him than God. Think about what Isaac surely learned from his father’s willingness to sacrifice him to God!
* As *fathers,* the greatest gift or legacy we can leave our children is a love of God. We do so by giving them a tangible example of God’s loving leadership- we *demonstrate* God’s loving leadership by emulating it in the home to them, Deut.6:1-9,12-14,17-18.

**An Example of Headship- Loving His Wife/Their Mother, Eph.5:23-33.**

* *Headship* is a position delegated by God to husbands, Gen.3:16; 1Cor.11:3 (*gune-* woman/wife, is singular here indicating *a* specific woman- his wife).
* But the position of *headship* (Eph.5:23ff) comes with responsibilities to: *love her as Christ love the church,* which is *sacrificially,* v.25; to *sanctify* and *cleanse* her as Christ did the church- which is spiritual *headship,* v.26; and present her as *glorious, spotless, holy,* and *blameless-* which is spiritual *leadership,* v.27; all of which are expressions of *loving her as himself-* which is spiritual/divine *love,* vv.28-33.
* The second greatest gift/legacy we leave our children is to manifest Christ loving headship of the church through our love and headship of their mother. Our boys learn how to love and lead a wife from us. Girls learn what kind of husband they need from their father. There are many reasons for the spiritual and even moral problems in our current world. Most of them can be traced to failures of men to be this kind of husbands/fathers, and/or women expecting/accepting this kind of husband/father.

**An Example of Discipline- Loving His Children, Heb.12:5-13.**

* *Discipline-* made up of *education, encouragement,* and *enforcement,* is and must be motivated by *love* to be effective, v.6. A failure to love enough leads to a lack of discipline, vv.7-8.
* Secondly, but really an extension or expression of this love, discipline must be *for their good,* rather than merely for our own convenience, v.10; cp. Col.3:21 and Eph.6:4a.
* As loving examples of God, a father should say “yes” when he can, and “no” when he should, and mean them both, cp. Matt.7:9-11; Eph.6:4b; 5:1-17; Matt.5:37.
* After a love for God, loving their mother (as Christ loved the church), the greatest gift a father can give his children is *discipline,* Heb.12:11, 12-18.

**Conclusions**

**Each Sunday we honor God as our Father, and Christ as our Spiritual Husband.**

**Today, we additionally honor *earthly* fathers who give us tangible examples of them both.**