

# ✓ A Father's Role in Formation

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### I. Introduction

#### I. What do we Mean by Formation?

- [Gal 4:19](#) *My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until **Christ is formed in you**,*
- **"Formed" .....morphoo.....to mould, shape , form**
  - God's plan for every believer includes **spiritual formation**
  - Spiritual formation is the intentional lifelong shaping of our life to be Christlike
- **Formation is the intentional shaping of a child preparing them for maturity and responsibility**
- Formation is the intentional shaping:
  - Identity
  - Character
  - Ability to shoulder Responsibility
  - Attitude to Authority
  - Ways of Treating other People
  - How to persevere through setbacks and difficulties
  - How to work and be faithful in tasks
  - How to view God as a Father
- **Natural Children need formation**
- **Spiritual Children also need formation .....Called discipleship training**

#### 2. God Directs Fathers to Shape their Children

- **OT**
- [Pro 22:6](#) **Train up** a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.
- **NT**
- [Eph 6:4](#) And you, **fathers**, do not provoke your children to wrath, but **bring them up** in the **training** and admonition of the Lord.
- **"Bring them up...ektrepho.....to nourish, promote health and strength, bring to maturity**
  - **"Training".....paideia..... To shape the thinking and moral values**
  - **"Admonition".....nouthesia...to bring to a persons attention, to correct from going astray**
- **Both Old and New Testaments agree: Fathers have responsibility to Shape their Children**
  - A Father does not merely raise a child but is called to shape or form them
  - It is not "permissive" parenting, or "gentle" parenting, or "helicopter" parenting
  - God gives clear responsibility to Fathers to shape and form their children
  - A Son is the Seed who builds his Fathers House ....he must be shaped by Father to do this
- **The Bible warns of what happens if a child is left to choose to do what he wants all the time**
  - *Prov.29:15.....a child left to himself he will bring his mother to shame*
  - *When in life will the child learn to accept... "No"?*
  - *Without boundaries and restraint a child learns to become self-centred and entitled*
- **Fathers shape their children either by intention of by neglect**
  - The father's influence occurs through:
    - What he says,
    - What he does,
    - What he permits,
    - What he prohibits,
    - What he celebrates,
    - What he models and
    - How he responds when things go wrong.
- **A father is called and assigned by God to help answer the child's developing questions:**
  - Who am I?
  - Do I belong?
  - Am I loved?
  - Am I safe?
  - What is right and wrong?
  - Can I succeed?
  - Can I trust authority?

- How should I treat others?
- What does a man/woman look like?
- What does responsibility look like?
- What does accountability look like?
- What does God the Father look like?

## 2. What is Meant by "Train Up?"

- [Pro 22:6](#) **Train up** a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.
- "Train up"....Heb. Chanak....to train, dedicate, to initiate, create first experience
- **Root Idea:**
  - Rub the palate of a newborn child with date syrup
  - Stimulate the baby to suck
  - Initiate appetite
- **Meaning of Chanak:** "
  - Not to teach a child everything or control its life, but to create the first taste, the first appetite, the first experience or direction

## 3. Hebrew Picture Letters

- **Chet**.....Picture of a Fence or Enclosure.....meaning to protect, surround, set boundaries
- **Nun**.....Picture of a Seed, a Sprout, a Fish...meaning life, offspring
- **Kaf**.....Picture of an Open Palm .....meaning to bend, shape, tame, discipline gently
- **Picture Meaning Expanded**
  - Train up....to surround the child and shape them with the hand
  - To dedicate a child by forming their first boundaries and shaping their early direction
  - It is not about controlling the child's future, but initiating the child's first spiritual appetite and shaping the early direction of their heart
- **It is about starting a child well, and is not a promise of final outcome**
- 4. **Jesus Spiritually Fathered His Disciples**
  - [Jhn 14:18](#) I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.
  - He is declaring to them that He had fathered them and would continue to Father b them through the Holy Spirit
    - Jesus was a spiritual father to His disciples
    - He modeled what it means to "train up"
    - He formed and shaped them to become World Changers

## II. Fathers Awaken Spiritual Appetite (Chanak=First Taste)

### 1. A Father initiates Spiritual Awareness and Hunger

- Create first experiences of God that awaken curiosity
  - Prayer at bedtime
  - Blessing at meals
  - Praying for his children
- Show the importance of The Bible
  - Read stories from the Bible
  - Share wisdom and personal insights
- Model Hunger for God
- Demonstrates the goodness and kindness of God
  - Joy and laughter
  - Warmth
  - Celebration

### 2. Jesus Initiated Spiritual Appetite with His Disciples

- He awakened their Hunger for God
  - *Jn.1:39 "Come and see"*
- He revealed the Fathers Goodness
  - *Jn.14:9 "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father."*
- His Life awakened desire:
  - *Lk.5:11 "They left everything and followed Him."*
  - They wanted what Jesus had. He awakened spiritual hunger
- **Jesus fathered them by awakening spiritual appetite**

## III. Fathers Establish Boundaries (Chet=The Fence)

- Pictograph....Chet=the fence that protects

- Boundaries are not restrictions ..they are protective fences that create safety

#### 1. **Fathers:**

- **Set loving clear limits and structures**
- **Guard the home atmosphere**
  - Peace
  - Order
  - Purity
- **Protect the child's heart from defilement**
  - Media
  - Influences within and outside the home
  - Attitudes
- **Establish Family Order and Rhythms**
  - Sunday Church
  - Meals
  - Prayer

#### 2. **Jesus Established Boundaries**

- He corrected harmful attitudes
  - *Lk.9:35 "You do not know what spirit you are of."*
- He warned them about destructive leadership
  - *Mat 16:6 Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."*
- He protected them from spiritual danger
  - *Lk.22:32 "I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail."*

- **Jesus Fathered them by creating a safe environment to grow**

### IV. **Fathers Shape Identity (Nun=the Seed/ Offspring)**

- *Pictograph..Nun=the Seed/Ofspring*

#### 1. **Fathers help their child understand who they are.**

- Speak identity Words
- Tell the family Spiritual Story
- Teach Belonging
- Validate and affirm them
- Correct Identity Lies

#### 2. **Jesus Shaped The Apostles Identity.**

- He gave them a new identity
  - *Jn.15:15 "I no longer call you servants... I call you friends."*
- He renamed them prophetically
  - *Jn.1:42 "You are Simon... you shall be called Peter."*
- He declared their calling
  - *Mt.4:19 "I will make you fishers of men."*

- **Jesus Fathered them by planting seeds of Identity in them**

### V. **Fathers Shape through Presence (Kaf=the Palm or Hand)**

- *Pictograph...The palm or hand shaping*

#### 1. **Fathers give hands on shaping of their children**

- Model Prayer
- Model Honour....honour his wife, God, authorities
- Show how to handle emotions
- Show how to repent
- Practice forgiveness ...how to repair relationships
- Living life from the Word of God

#### 2. **Jesus Shaped His Apostles by His Presence with them**

- He Lived with them
  - *Mk.3:14 "He appointed twelve... that they might be with Him."*
- He modelled Humility
  - *Lk.22:27 "I am among you as one who serves."*
  - *Jn.13: Footwashing*
- He Modelled Strength and Courage
  - *Mat 23:13-35 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in."*
- He Demonstrated Forgiveness
  - *Lk.23:48 "Father, forgive them."*

- **Jesus Fathered them by His presence and life example. He modelled what a Son of God lives like**

### VI. **Fathers Dedicate Their Child (Chanak=Dedicate, Set Direction)**

- *Pictograph...Chanak means to dedicate*

**1. In Hebrew culture dedication was the responsibility of the father**

- Naming
- Blessing
- Setting direction
- Declaring Identity
- Consecrating the child to God

**2. Jesus Dedicated the Apostles to a Path (Chanak = "set direction")**

- Jesus prayed for the Apostles
    - [Jhn 17:15](#) *I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.*
  - Jesus Commissioned the Apostles
    - *Jn.20:21 As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."*
  - Jesus entrusted the Apostles with His Mission
    - *Mt.28:19"Go and make disciples of all nations."*
  - Jesus Empowered the Apostles
    - *Jn.20:22 "He breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"*
- **Jesus Fathered them by setting them apart and empowering them for their life calling**

**VII. Summary**

- **Proverbs 22:6 is not telling parents to:**
  - Teach everything
  - Control outcomes
  - Guarantee salvation
  - Prevent wandering
- **It is telling Fathers to:**
  - *Give the child the right first taste, and they will remember it even if they wander.*
- **This is why the verse says:**
  - *"When he is old, he will not depart from it."*
  - Not because the child never strays —but because the first taste remains.
- **Invitation: Receive Christ...become a Child of God**