

OUR CHILDREN AND GOD

“He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge.” —PROVERBS 14:26

Parents do not get a practice run. We make mistakes along the way, and in the process, discover that parenting is probably the greatest challenge to our selfishness. Philip Yancey, one of the world’s leading Christian authors, has said that children draw out of us the most important thing in our lives, which is that we sacrificially love and care and lay down our lives.

In Ephesians, Chapters 5 & 6, Paul gets down to the very practical issues of life, and does not detach them from Christ or our relationship with Him. Rather, he says this is an integral outworking of our relationship with Christ, and that our child-rearing and family life is a spiritual exercise. We have such a small window of time to exercise this most essential influence on our children, and it needs to be done with loving sensitivity.

There is a saying that goes, “All our earthly relationships are to come out of a heavenly framework.” This is not something additional to our spiritual lives, but in all our relationships, being filled with the Spirit lies at the core. Our children need to see that we love God, and trust Him by showing them our trust in God. We cannot impose the Christian life on our children, but rather be sensitive to the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives. We can easily provide them with a false sense of security by giving them the

impression they must believe in certain things simply because we do. As they grow older, that will inevitably provoke resistance, and one of the most detrimental things we can do is create such an expectancy that they will rebel against it.

Spiritually, we cannot save our children. They have to become Christians for themselves, but what we can do is live before them in a way that the relationship we have with Christ is real and evident to them. Our homes should be places where we submit to one another out of love and reverence for Christ. The greatest contribution we can make is demonstrating that our lives are lived in dependence upon Christ. Eventually, our children will leave home and be exposed to all kinds of philosophies and things that have gone wrong in this world. We have to trust that the nurturing and caring they received at home will cause them to meet not with dad's God or mom's God, but with their God, whom they come to know for themselves.

PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, help me to raise my children to become men and women of God who love You, and live their lives in trust and dependence on You.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I bringing God into the lives of my children?