

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Why Fathers Are So Important to Their Daughters

Once a week I visit a young Christian man in jail. Almost four years ago he got his girlfriend pregnant. He decided not to marry her because she was not a Christian. This young man neglected his daughter financially and otherwise. He is now serving a three-year prison term for not paying child support. Although he has repented of his sins, he will never be able to reverse his choices, change his record, or remove the consequences of those poor choices. He will probably never be a significant influence in his daughter's life. She has already lived three years without a father in the home.

Some believe a father's absence is devastating to a son, but not nearly as difficult to a daughter. Why not? Do fathers not have a role in rearing daughters? Is there no contribution I can make to my two daughters by being home? Titus 2:4-5 tells us that aged women are supposed to teach younger women a number of important truths. Does this command remove the father's

responsibility to teach his daughters? Ephesians 6:4 applies to all our children. There are some things that the older women cannot teach our little girls nearly as well as their fathers can.

Fathers can teach their daughters about men from a man's perspective. I understand the male ego, the male sex drive, and his need for accomplishment as well as anyone. I can warn my daughters about immodest clothing even better than my wife can. I know what tempts men and what they think when they see a woman who is dressed improperly. I wonder if David failed to warn his daughter, Tamar, about the male sex drive (I Sam. 13:1-21). Perhaps Jacob did not share this knowledge with Dinah either (Gen. 34:1-31). Both of these women were sexually violated without provocation. Tamar and Dinah were perfectly virtuous in their behavior. If the male urge is so strong without being teased, imagine how strong it becomes when enticed.

Although the Bible does not contain many examples of fathers and daughters, we do have a couple in the Old Testament. Judges 11 tells us about Jephthah. To solicit God's help in a battle against Ammon he vowed a foolish vow. He would offer a burnt sacrifice of the first thing that exited his house upon his return (30-31). He was devastated when his daughter came out after the victory. Jephthah and his daughter both agreed that a vow to the Lord should not be disregarded (34-36). She was given two months to mourn over her virginity (37-38). I believe that her grief was because she would never marry and have children. Her father's vow undermined her future.

A second example is that of Lot. He chose to move his family to Sodom when he and Abraham parted company. Lot put his children in the midst of the worst influence that could be found. When angels came into Lot's home, the men of the city demanded they be brought out for sex. Lot offered his two virgin daughters to the men instead (Gen. 19:4-8). Although the angels rescued Lot from this episode, they could not save his daughters from the influence of evil. These heavenly visitors had come to get Lot's family out of town before the cities of the plain were destroyed.

Some believe Lot had just two daughters. They conclude that the sons-in-law that Lot tried to convince to leave were betrothed to these two virgins (Gen. 19:14). Others believe he had four or more daughters. A plurality of his girls had already married men of Sodom. If this was true, then Lot could not rescue his married daughters unless he convinced their husbands to depart. One of the most powerful lessons we need to learn as fathers is that we will someday lose our girls to their husband's authority. We must teach them what to look for in a man, and we must place them in an environment where such a proper man can be found.

Lot's wife died as she was leaving the city. The two virgin daughters feared their father would have no heirs as they were living alone in the mountains. Consequently they got their father drunk and committed incest with him. Lot had gotten his daughters out of Sodom, but he could not get Sodom out of his daughters.

If a daughter grows up without a dad, she will view men as unreliable. If a father abuses her, she will fear men. If her father is a weakling, she will marry in order to dominate her husband. If a father makes decisions without considering the family, a daughter will believe all men are selfish. But if a father rears his daughter according to God's word, then she will learn that she has value. She will marry a man who appreciates God and loves her for her virtues. Fathers, we are important to the present and future happiness of our daughters. Let's guide them toward the joy to be found in this life but more importantly toward the blessedness that is beyond this life.

- Ron Roberts

The Venom of Vengeance

When we are wronged in some way, our natural inclination is to fight back. Some people hold to the philosophy, "I don't get mad, I get even!" We hear such expressions as "settling the score," or "what goes around, comes around;" All of which points to the spirit of so many who are convinced that revenge is sweet! And yet the Lord says otherwise. We must remember that being conformed to the image of Christ demands that we be controlled by love – a love that "does no harm to its neighbor" (Rom.13:10), and in fact "is not easily angered" and "keeps no record of past wrong" (1 Cor.13:5).

In 1 Samuel chapter 24, we encounter a time in David's life wherein he certainly had an opportunity to take revenge, and yet

he resisted. He wanted nothing to do with the venom of vengeance. What can we learn from David and this account in 1 Samuel 24 that will help us resist a spirit of revenge? David finally decided to listen to the Lord. When David found himself in the same cave with king Saul, his men saw this as an opportunity for revenge.

Refusing to get revenge doesn't mean that we refuse to hold others accountable for their actions. It means simply that we must refuse to retaliate. In fact, they argued that "the Lord" surely had brought them together for just such an occasion (vs.4a). Unfortunately, David gave in to their foolish advice and "secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe" (vs.4b). One of the greatest tests of character comes during moments like these, when our enemy is in a most vulnerable situation. But regardless of how we seek to soften the subtlety of settling the score, God calls it revenge. Fortunately, David's heart "troubled him" (vs.5) and he stopped paying attention to the advice of his men and remembered the word of the Lord (vs.6). We too must listen to the Lord (see Rom.12:17-21) rather than "doing what seems good to us." No doubt, if there's to be a reprisal, the Lord tells us to leave it in His hands.

David was willing to show respect for a man's position, in spite of that man's person. David's act of cutting Saul's robe was an expression of the utmost disdain and disrespect, not so much for Saul, but for the position of king. Regardless of all the evil Saul intended for David, David would no longer show disdain for such a high office. What a great example for us. David was willing to show respect for the position occupied by Saul, when he knew the

person behind the position was evil. Remember, it's possible to show respect for the office or position one holds, while having very little if any respect for that person due to their lack of integrity and godliness.

David recognized his right and God's role. When Saul left the cave, David followed afterward. David was no coward. He had no problem confronting the lies spoken against him (vs.9) and the evil intended for him. Using a piece of Saul's robe as evidence, David opened his defense (vss.11-15). David then closed his defense by asserting for a second time that he was willing for the Lord to both judge and avenge (vss.12,15). Refusing to get revenge doesn't mean that we refuse to hold others accountable for their actions. It means simply that we must refuse to retaliate. The Lord doesn't call us to be weak and passive, He calls us to forgive our enemies and love as He first loved (Matt.5:38-48). Someone has said that "while revenge gets you even with your enemy; forgiveness puts you above him." When we have been hurt so deeply, we should expect that the temptation to retaliate will be very strong. But it's then that we must not avenge ourselves nor give place to the devil. We must not return evil for evil, but "always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people" (1 Thess.5:15).

Let us trust in the Lord and leave room for His way and wrath. Let us learn from David and resist when we are tempted to seek revenge. Let us rid ourselves of the venom of vengeance.

Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men [Rom.12:17-18].

- Paul White

Be Content - But. . .

We should be content with what we have, but not with what we are. Paul said, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." (Phil. 4:11). But Paul was not content with himself, so he stated, "Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13, 14).

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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Lessons From The Conversion of Apollos!"* (text: Acts 18:24-28); Sunday evening: *"Admonition To The Corinthians!"* (text: 1 Cor. 16:13-14).

OUR GOSPEL MEETING: July 27 – Aug. 1, Sunday through Friday, with Jeremy Paschall preaching. Sunday at our regularly scheduled times, and Monday through Friday at 7:00 p.m.