

What Fathers and Mothers can give their Children!

By Al Felder

“A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children’s children” (Prov. 13:22).

Parents can have a profound impact on their children’s lives. This impact can also reach future generations. There may come a time when we feel as if we have nothing left to offer. We have raised our children, and they have children of their own. The benefits that we have to offer our children will never cease. Even after they are grown, we can still have an impact on our children’s lives as well as our grandchildren. We can give our children an inheritance, not of money or possessions, but of godly living. Who we are impacts those in our charge, either for good or bad. I would like to challenge that line of thinking for just a moment by considering the impact that one man had on his descendants and the world.

“If you walk the streets of Shrewsbury, England, you will find memorials to a man of great influence. There is a statue outside his school and a sign outside of the home of his birth, noting the date of February 12, 1809. This is the birthplace of Charles Darwin, who at the age of 50 would publish *On the Origin of Species*. Darwin proposed that life can be explained without God. By concluding that a supposed link between ape and man meant that there is no God, his ideas left humanity to decide right and wrong on their own, to write their own rules and to do their own thing.

The implications of Darwin’s legacy are far reaching. He paved the way for moral relativism (everyone does what is right in his own eyes – no absolutes), and fueled racism (claiming that blacks, aborigines, and others are inferior, less evolved races.) His ideas have fueled the abortion industry, leading to the conclusion that an unborn child is nothing more than a lump of cells. The ideas of Darwin even paved the way for Hitler, who used them to justify the extermination of those he considered less than ideal – resulting in the mass murder of millions of Jews, gypsies, and others.

One of the students involved in the Columbine school shootings wore a T-shirt with “natural selection” written on it. The more students are told they are just animals, and have evolved by natural processes – the more they act consistently with this view of origins. As generations are trained to believe there is no God, thus no absolute authority, then there is no basis for determining right and wrong.”¹

¹ Ham, Ken Ham and Steve. 2009. *Raising Godly Children in an Ungodly World*. Green Forest, AR : Master Books, 2009. pp. 27-28.

What an impact one man had on his family and the world. Unfortunately, this impact was a negative one. What impact will you have? What will you leave behind for those who follow in your footsteps? For just a little while we would like to consider the idea of what fathers and mothers can give their children.

The number one thing that parents can give their children is time. I put this first because it is the foundation that all other benefits parents can give their children rest upon. If we as parents are uncommitted to giving our time to our children, we will not be able to instill within them the virtues that are found in God's word.

"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (2 Tim. 1:5). An underlying fact of this passage of scripture is that Timothy's mother and grandmother spent time with him teaching him who he should be. In many ways children are like a blank canvas. They absorb the things around them in order to paint the picture of their life. They are constantly studying ways of living, behaving, and thinking. If we as parents fail to be there for our children and model these things for them, they will get them from society.

The effect of children spending time with their parents can never be over stated. Researchers at the University of Minnesota studied teen boys and girls to determine what most significantly affected the decisions they made about drinking, whether to take drugs, have sex, and so on. The study concluded that the number one influence in a child's life regarding these decisions was his or her parents. The relationship that a child has with his or her parents is the best indicator of the decisions he or she will make in life.

A deeper look at the data also showed that what really influences children isn't simply what parents say. It isn't just discipline. It is feeling connected - a deep sense that the child fits into the family - he or she belongs with mom and dad. The child feels appreciated, loved, and affirmed. The accomplishment of this can only come from one thing, time.

As parents, it's easy to fall into the trap set by society. It is a race against other parents to provide our children with stuff. We indulge their every desire and inadvertently teach them to find pleasure in the things of this world. We supply them with toys, clothes, money, and entertainment. We make sure that we fill up every minute of every day with activities. In reality, what our children really need is more time with mom and dad.

The best thing that we as parents can do for our children is give them our undivided attention. Take time from your schedule. Turn off the television, cell phone, computer, whatever occupies your time, and spend it with your kids.

Second, we must give our children a desire for God's word. One of the staples and delicacies of the Australian diet is a black paste called vegemite. It is made from yeast extract and salt. It is as standard to the Australian diet as peanut butter is to the average American. On many occasions vegemite will be served on toast for breakfast.

Most Americans, when given vegemite on toast, can't move fast enough to gulp down some water and get rid of what to them tastes horrible. To them it is hideous. Why do Australian's crave vegemite while American's can't stand it? Australian mothers feed vegemite to their babies so they will learn to acquire a taste for it. Americans have never acquired a taste for it, and can't stand it.

If we want our children to have a deep desire for the word of God, we have to instill it in them at a very early age. Our children need to be fed the word of God so they will learn to acquire a taste for it. *"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up"* (Deut. 6:7). As parents we need to make the Bible a part of our everyday life. We need to talk to our children about it, read it to them, and let them see us reading it for ourselves. By doing this, we can instill within our children a desire for God's word.

Within this desire for the word of God, we must also instill within our children the fact that God's word is our full and sole authority in life. This idea is challenged every day. One of the main ways that the authority of God's word is challenged is by attacking its beginning. Our children are indoctrinated by society in the belief that the Bible is wrong when it comes to the origin of man. The Bible teaches that God created, but society would have us believe otherwise. If our children are taught that they cannot trust the Bible when it discusses man's origin, how will they trust the Bible when it discusses salvation and morality? The answer to this question is that they will not trust the Bible. By doubting the beginning of the Bible, they will ultimately not respect its authority.

We need to give our children a solid foundation of Biblical teaching. The Bible is to be the central starting point around which all of our beliefs and convictions must revolve. If we don't transmit our knowledge of God to the next generation, it will be lost.

Third, mothers and fathers need to be a defense for their children. As parents, we need to recognize that popular culture is our enemy; it's competing for our sons and daughters, and it's up to us to defeat it. Popular culture is devoted to inciting teenagers against their parents and undermining traditional values. It is a 24-7 attack on all things related to godly living.

One way that parents can be a defense for their children is through restraint. Limit excess to television, games, and other forms of media. By taking this simple step, parents will

help their child become happier and better. Children need less time with the influence of the world and more time with your influence.

Another way to accomplish this task is through discipline and setting boundaries. *“Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die”* (Prov. 23:13). When children are young they should have borders placed around their movement, language, and behavior. As they grow older some of these borders are taken down, or moved back in order to give them more latitude. Some borders are reinforced because your children will try to break them.

Teenagers often try to manipulate their parents by accusing them of not trusting them. They may complain and act as if they are being treated unfairly, but as the Bible states it will not kill them. The fact of the matter is that deep down inside children know that these boundaries are a sign that their parents care for them. Children with curfews know that someone wants them home, and is probably waiting for them. Children who are told to mind their language know that their parents want them to be well spoken.

No matter what children may say, they know that the fact you thoughtfully and consistently enforce rules of behavior means you love them. These rules are proof that you care. Equally important, they train children to build boundaries for themselves. From your rules your children will learn what is acceptable and what is not, what is good and what is bad.

In conclusion, children need their parents. *“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive”* (Eph. 4:14). They can be easily influenced, and they need their parents to protect them. Children need the time, attention, affection, and approval of their parents.