

## "A Generous Father"

June 17, 2018



### THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Proverbs 4:1-13; Deuteronomy 8:25 (NIV);  
Matthew 6:14-15 (NIV); Luke 15:11-32;  
Matthew 5:14-16 (NIV)

### DAY 1

#### Read Proverbs 4:1-13

One of a father's or father-figure's most important roles is to be a teacher to his children, and by extension, to their friends and other young people. Dads, coaches, school teachers, uncles, grandfathers and other adults have an opportunity to instill virtuous values, and Christ-like character in children. Our passage from Proverbs is focused on verbal instruction, but actions speak volumes and children learn at an early age to copy the examples set for them by the men in their lives.

- **If you are an adult who has the opportunity to interact with children, what wisdom do you share with them?**
- **Is the example you set one that you would be proud to have a child follow? What habit would you like to get rid of in order to be a better example to a young person?**
- **When is the last time you talked to a younger person about your faith and the saving grace of Jesus?**

No matter your age, you can become a positive influence to someone younger than you are. Ask God to help you

identify a person who would benefit from your influence; then act on what God reveals to you.

## DAY 2

Read [Deuteronomy 8:2-5 \(NIV\)](#)

We sometimes equate discipline with harsh punishments that are no longer acceptable in our culture, but parents who discipline their children by having them assume age-appropriate responsibility help their children to become responsible adults. God disciplined an entire culture of people when he guided them out of slavery. God handed down the law and established rules to create a culture that loved God and cared for its members. Of course Israel did not always obey God's laws and God disciplined his people out of love and a desire to have them love God and neighbor.

- **If you are responsible for a child, how do you create an environment that encourages the development of self-discipline?**
- **Do you ever discipline a child in anger and then later wish you had waited before holding them accountable for a misdeed?**

Reflect upon the ways you have disciplined children or young people. Ask God to help you combine discipline with wise teaching so that your discipline promotes growth and maturity in the young people you influence.

## DAY 3

Read [Matthew 6:14-15 \(NIV\)](#)

When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he stressed the importance of giving and receiving forgiveness. Many relationships between parents and their children are marred by harsh judgement and lack of forgiveness, yet that is not how God treats us - his children. Forgiveness does not mean that there are no consequences for bad

behavior, but it does mean that discipline fits the misbehavior and is meted out with words that remind the child that you love them, but that love does not mean "anything goes."

- **Do you have any broken relationships with a child or young person in your life? What have you contributed to the brokenness and what has the child contributed?**
- **Do you enable bad behavior by assuming that forgiveness means there are no consequences for wrongdoing?**
- **Do you ever treat your child or grandchild like you want to be his or her best friend? Does this posture prevent you from setting boundaries?**

Pray for yourself or for a person you know who suffers from broken relationships with children. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you or your acquaintance the difference between forgiveness and appeasement. Ask the Spirit to help you be honest with yourself about your contribution to the brokenness.

## **DAY 4**

**Read [Luke 15:11-32](#)**

The story of the prodigal son is about much more than forgiveness. It offers us an important reminder about God's redeeming love. If we believe that all people are created in God's image and that redemption is available to everyone, then the example of the father in this parable is an important one. Too often adults treat children who have strayed from the straight and narrow as though they are no longer worthy of love or that they are beyond redemption. This attitude is the opposite of everything Jesus taught about forgiveness and God's joy when a prodigal returns to the fold. This does not mean there are no consequences for wrongdoing. It simply means that we should treat every child and our adult children with

instructive discipline that offers both forgiveness, accountability, and reconciliation.

- **Do you have an unreconciled difference with a child or any other person? What led to the broken state of the relationship?**
- **How can you offer an opportunity for reconciliation for reconciliation between you and the other person?**
- **Are you waiting for an estranged child or grandchild to take the first step to reconciliation? If you are waiting, are you doing so out of stubbornness or pride?**

## **DAY 5**

**Read [Matthew 5:14-16 \(NIV\)](#)**

Jesus reminded us in his Sermon on the Mount that when we shine the light of Christ on others, we bring glory to God. Children, including adult children, who shine the light of Christ to guide, encourage, and love others not only glorify God, they honor the teachings of their earthly fathers, mothers and role models who brought them up in the faith. Long after our fathers and grandfathers go on to life eternal, we can continue to honor their memories and the memories of the adults who influenced us on our faith journeys by bringing Christ's light and love to a hurting world.

- **How to do you "shine your light before others" and bring glory to our Heavenly Father?**
- **Reflect on the role models who encouraged you on your faith journey? Do you follow the example they set for you?**
- **Does your life reflect favorably on the adults who influenced you?**

Pray a prayer of gratitude for the adults who raised you in the faith. If you are able, contact one of your most influential role models and thank him or her for their example, guidance and encouragement.

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