

Father's Day

Honestly, has there ever been a child that thought their Dad spent enough time with them? Has there ever been a wife that didn't think their husband worked too many hours? In a perfect world, like the Cosby Show, a real dad wouldn't work and could develop close relationships with his family. But this is not a perfect world and we have to understand that dad is human too!

For some of us, Father's Day is a happy day; for others, it's not. Some of us have great relationships with our fathers and some of us don't. Our circumstances are so different when it comes to our relationships with our fathers, so I'd like to talk about something we all can relate to tonight; how important it is to please our heavenly father.

Here are six specific things that please God according to Scripture.

1. Attention

2 Timothy 2:4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

God doesn't want the things of this world to distract our attention from Him. God loves our attention. We must take steps daily to give Him undistracted devotion.

2. Obedience

John 8:29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

In John 8:29, Jesus said that he always did things that pleased the Father. That's a remarkable statement. Doing the things that please the Father means being obedient to what God tells us to do. Jesus lived a life of total obedience to the will of the Father and it was pleasing to the Father. What Jesus did must become the goal for our lives; we should always do what pleases the Father.

3. Holiness

1 Peter 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

Holiness is about our lifestyle. We become holy when we do what God would have us do.

4. Faith

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Faith pleases the Father. He loves for His children to trust Him. Faith and trust have been very hard for the children of God over the centuries. We respond very strongly to the data of what's observable around us. It affects how we live more than anything else. We live in a world where seeing is believing, but God says, "I'm pleased when you trust Me for things you can't see."

5. Sacrifices

Hebrews 13:15-16

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

By giving thanks, we acknowledge that God is sovereign and working all things. By giving to others, we share the grace given to us by God. When God sees people praising Him or doing good things for others, it gives Him pleasure. So don't neglect doing good to one another, especially those who are of the household of faith.

6. Witnessing

1 Corinthians 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

I'd love to see all of us share our faith with others on a consistent basis. Not because people need to be saved, but because it pleases God! We need to understand that when we share the good news of Christ and when people believe, God is thrilled along with all of heaven. Nothing could please Him more. There's nothing greater on God's heart than reaching the lost.

Maybe we can't always please our earthly fathers, but we can all please our heavenly Father. We must all remember an important truth: God doesn't love us on the basis of performance. If we please Him really good, He doesn't love us more. And if we rarely please Him, He doesn't love us less. Our bad performance only affects our relationship (salvation), but not His love. That's part of the mystery of God's love for us. But I can't imagine living as a believer without a deep desire to please God. The joy of our hearts should be giving God pleasure.

The Advantages of Pleasing God Rather than Man

1. There is only one God you have to please, but there are many men.
2. God doesn't put more on your plate than you can chew.
3. God is perfect in all ways, he is not capable of misunderstanding your situation.
4. God is constant and unchangeable.
5. God is merciful.

We are living in a time where the importance of fatherhood is very much maligned. The media has gone out of its way to portray fathers as unreliable and spineless. Can you name one television program where a father is portrayed as he should be? Not since The Cosby Show has fatherhood been presented as the noble calling it really is.

What do young people expect their father to be in a world that is changing quickly and that often fails to provide positive direction for them? Here is a sample of what has been researched.

1. Teens expect their fathers to ask them how they are doing, how their day was and then take time to listen to their answers. They need to know their father cares about them. In one survey, 73% of teens said having someone to listen to them is "very, very important." The Internet may be a great place to chat, but is anyone really listening?
2. Teens expect their fathers to be consistent and to model the behavior and beliefs they talk about. Fathers are expected to teach moral beliefs and standards, and to be an example. Teens hate hypocrisy and double standards; they want authenticity.
3. Teens long for fathers to love them unconditionally. They need to know that their dad will love them "no matter what." Teens want to see the emotional and compassionate side of the man they look up to.

4. As much as teenagers need guidance they also need freedom. Freedom is earned as they prove they are responsible. Preparing your teens to live in the real world is a long and complicated process, but a very rewarding one when done properly.

Without a doubt, we live in a busy world where everyone's schedule gets filled up before we have time to look at it. Fathers feel the pressure, often feeling like no one understands, of providing for the family while juggling a hundred other important issues at the same time. However, you only get one lifetime to raise your children. The morals and values you teach your children will change their lives forever. As one mother put it "When you die, the only thing you take with you is the love and memories of your children." If we only take the love and memories of our children, then we need to ask ourselves the question "What will their memories of us be?"