

September 2010 R & R

## *Parental Respect*

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The last two months we have looked at two basic realities to teach our children. They need to obey and that all lying is wrong. A third and final principle I would like to discuss is that of respect. Our children must all be taught to have respect for those in authority, especially their parents.

In 1 Timothy 3:4-5 we are given some qualifications for those who would be elders in the church. One qualification is that they “rule” or “manage” their home well. In 1 Corinthians 11:3 we are told, “...The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” At first glance it might appear that it is more important for children to be respectful of their dad before their mother, but I don’t think so. A father is to lead his family—his wife and children—as Christ leads, cares for, and loves the church. It is because of this leadership position fathers have that children are to respect them. If children have a lack of respect for their father whom they can see, then how can they ever have a full and deep respect for their heavenly Father whom they cannot see?

What about those children who would do nothing disrespectful in front of their father when he is present, but are disrespectful in his absence? What about when dad is away? How do his children act when he is not looking? Wouldn’t this be a true test of whether or not children have a respect for his authority?

What I am talking about is respect and honor to the extent that children will do what they know to do because they want to please him. Even when their dad isn’t there, they still sense his presence. Isn’t this the way God is with His people? God doesn’t physically come in the door to see us doing right or wrong, yet we know that we are to behave and act appropriately at all times because God can see all places at all times. We don’t do this out of fear, but out of love and respect for what He did in sending Christ to die on the cross for us and because we know God will always keep His word.

Our children should behave and act appropriately in the same manner, not merely from fear of punishment, but out of love and respect for their earthly father as he represents the heavenly Father. The exact same principles apply.

So where does the mother come in?

Well, who is left in charge of the children when the dad is away? Every home is different, but in my home, it is my wife, their mother. So what is so special and important about her authority? She has authority because she is my chosen bride and their mother. When she speaks, the children (hopefully) understand and realize that any violation against what she asks of them is a violation of my authority. Any disrespect shown to her is disrespect to me because she and I will stand as one. I will back her up and support her in the child-rearing decisions she has made. I have entrusted that to her (Proverbs 31:11-12).

This is part of what is meant in 1 Corinthians 11:7 where we are told that man is the glory of Christ and woman is the glory of man. Wives are not inferior to husbands. My wife is my chosen representative. My children should show her the same respect and honor as they show me.

These are three key principles we must teach our children about roles and responsibility in the Christian home. There are many more, and Think magazine is a great resource for accomplishing our primary goals in Christian child-rearing: Raising happy, faithful, dedicated, Christian adults.