

June 2004: Parents

by Aaron Greenway

Do you remember when you were eighteen? You know, that age when you knew everything? Now, I am thirty years old and with each year I find myself not only agreeing with my parents, I find myself thinking like them. Can you imagine the shock if I had known that 12 years ago? And now, with each passing year, my parents have become more and more precious. When we were kids, we took so many things for granted and now after almost having lost my father to a stroke and my mother to cancer six years ago, every moment with them is valuable.

We are between Mother's Day and Father's Day, two days where we celebrate our parents. Sometimes, we send cards. Other times, we can go physically to the house and hand out hugs and kisses. Those are special. I remember one year that I went home to Iowa to surprise my mother for Mother's Day. Can you see the surprise on her face when I showed up at the door? It was the year she went through chemotherapy. We never know how long our parents will be with us. I have friends who have lost their parents to sickness or to accidents. We don't always know how long they will be with us. My grandmother once told me that there isn't a day that goes by that she doesn't think of her mother. We never forget, do we? Parents make such a print on our lives that it impacts us into eternity.

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never will. Nevertheless, what our parents did affected us to who we are today. We can learn from their mistakes, and we can take the good and make it a part of ourselves. No parent is ever perfect. And you know what? It doesn't matter what has happened in the past, the blood of Jesus covers all that. Love always covers a multitude of sin. And when that comes into play, you can spend time, laugh, and love them always. Perhaps realizing the kind of parent you might be and the forgiveness you might need will help you understand it.

Raising children is not easy. I have watched my friends. With some of them, I have thought, "I cannot believe they let him do that!" With others I have thought, "Great idea! I will try that!" No matter what, I think for a father (at least) there is a feeling of utter helplessness when his son or daughter is born. We ask God, "What now, Lord? What do I do with this little bundle?" Because now we know that putting food on the table is simply not enough. Children need attention. And we are in a crisis of families without fathers. And yet the father plays such an important role.

A few months ago, I watched a T.V. program called "Clase 406" (Class 406). One of the characters, Gabriela, had one of those fathers who was interested in her mother just enough to get her pregnant and then take off. When her father tried to get back into her life, Gabriela's response was this, "I have lived 18 years of my life without a father. I think I can make it the rest of the way now without you." When it is our turn to be mommas and daddies, how will we handle our God-given responsibility.

We see many kinds of parents in the Bible like Abraham and Sarah, David, or Hannah. We see many parents today. We have our own parents as examples. All of those will shape the kind of parents we will be one day. I am grateful for my parents, Don and Sharon. They are not perfect. But they raised me to know the Lord. Their qualities, good or bad, have molded me into the father I will be to my own children.

This is why it is important to raise our children to love Jesus. It is important that they know God. This will form their entire destiny. The decisions we make now will affect not just us, but the next generation of people. I have an old Steve Green song entitled "Find Us Faithful". The

lyrics go like this...

May all who come behind us find us faithful.

May the fire of our devotion light their way.

*May the footsteps that we leave lead them to believe
and the lives we live inspire them to obey.*

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful.

The torch of the gospel that was left to us by the previous generation will be passed to the next. Even if our parents did not pass us that torch, there is still time to light it so our children will have the benefit of serving the King.