

THE TEACHING LEGACY OF DEREK PRINCE

Success in Our Homes

Success is a byword of Western civilization. By environment and upbringing we are continually challenged to seek success in all that we do—in our professions, in sports, in politics, in our personal lives. It is an overriding motivation. Success in God’s eyes, however, is often measured by a standard quite different from our own. God brought this home to me in a very personal way. I once heard a fellow minister define an expert as “a man away from home with a briefcase.” Since I traveled a great deal, and always had my briefcase with me, I was, by that standard, an expert.

However, while I was meditating on this one day, the Lord spoke to my spirit, saying, “You may travel all over the world with your briefcase and preach to thousands of people and have them flock to the altars when you finish, but if your home is not in order—in My eyes, *you are a failure.*”

Having a great desire to be a success in God’s eyes, I took this to heart. As a result, there opened up to me a new understanding of home life and parental responsibility.

“I Write to You, Fathers”

In 1 John 2:13 the apostle says, “I write to you, fathers. . . .” Let me do the same. Let me speak very

directly to each one of you who is a father: You may succeed in every other area of life, but if you fail as a father, then in God’s eyes you are a *failure at life.*

In Ephesians 6:4 Paul sums up in one verse the primary responsibilities of fathers: “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition [education] of the Lord.” In Colossians 3:21 Paul repeats the initial warning, “Fathers, do not provoke your children,” adding, “lest they become discouraged.” Mothers, of course, are intimately involved in the care and upbringing of children. Nevertheless, the primary responsibility rests on the fathers.

A father has two obligations toward his children: first, *communication*; second, *education*. The order is



important. If the channels of communication between father and children are not kept open, then the father will be frustrated in his task of education. It is not enough for the father to give instruction. The child must be willing also to receive it.

In order to maintain communication, a father must guard against two opposite attitudes in his children: rebellion on the one hand, and discouragement on the other. Therefore he must give time and attention to each child. He must cultivate each child as an individual personality. No two children in a family are the same. Discipline that will benefit one child will crush another. One child will receive correction in a form that will merely provoke rebellion from another.

In frequent counseling sessions with adults, I have discovered that many of their problems can be traced back to a situation in which a father—by anger, unfairness or indifference—provoked his child.

▲

The Home Is the Center

It is not merely the New Testament that lays these responsibilities upon fathers. The same principle runs through the whole Bible. In every dispensation alike, God has ordained that the spiritual life of His people be

centered in their home. Deuteronomy 11:18–21 speaks very directly about this to us as parents:

Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul. . . . You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.

God places upon us, as parents, the responsibility to teach His words and His ways to our children at home. This responsibility cannot be relegated to some special religious institution—temple, church or Sunday school. Nor can it be delegated to some special professional class—priests, preachers or Sunday school teachers. As parents, we must instruct our children at home in the words and the ways of God.

This is not a question merely of setting up a “family altar” or holding “family devotions.” To be

effective, spiritual instruction and discipline must be continuous. God says, “When you lie down and when you rise up.” This covers all our waking hours. It is our business to interweave the teaching of God’s Word with all the daily activities of our home life.

The late Dr. V. Raymond Edman, one-time president of Wheaton College, once wrote: “Looking back on the way I brought up my children, if I had to do it over, I’d spend more time with them in simple, non-religious activities.” He had found that the things the grown children remembered most were the informal times of just being together. Real communication with a child is not achieved in five minutes. Often the most important things are said with a child at the time you would least expect it—in a casual or offhand way. If the casual contact is not there, these things will never be said.

▲

Heaven on Earth

Meditating upon the passage in Deuteronomy 11:18–21 in the King James Version, I was gripped by the concluding phrase: “as the days of heaven upon the earth.” We often hear people talking in an extravagant way about “heaven on earth,” but I confess I had not realized that

the phrase is taken from the Bible. I was even more surprised to discover that it is there applied to the home life of God's people. How many Christian homes today could accurately be described as heaven on earth?

Yet this is truly God's purpose. He desires that each home be a living representation of the nature of heaven here on earth, reproducing in time the eternal love relationship that exists between the Persons of the Godhead—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We often assume that home life began with the human race, but this is not so. In John 14:2 Jesus says, "In My Father's house are many mansions." *House* in Scripture has a deeper meaning than a material, physical building; it is used to portray an entire family under the headship of a father. It is not just a few people living together under one roof. God has always had a much richer meaning than that, one that is bound up in the very nature of the Godhead.

▲

Fatherhood, Headship, Fellowship

The relationship between the Persons of the Godhead in heaven is intimate, containing three eternal aspects. These are the three aspects God desires to be projected into our homes on

earth.

The first is *fatherhood*. God the Father, has ever been the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Christ has ever been His Son. In Ephesians 3:14–15 Paul says: "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

The Greek word here translated "family" is *patria*, formed directly from *pater*, meaning "father." The New King James Version says "family," but the J. B. Phillips Translation renders this "fatherhood," which is a more faithful translation of the Greek. This passage shows us not only that God is the Father of Christ, but also that the *office* of fatherhood in all the earth is derived from and established on the pattern of the office that God the Father holds within the Godhead. All fatherhood is a projection of the nature of God the Father.

The second eternal aspect of relationship within the Godhead is *headship*. In 1 Corinthians 11:3 Paul says, "I want you to know that the head of every man [meaning the male] is Christ, the head of the woman [wife] is man, and *the head of Christ is God.*" In the order of the universe, we find that the headship of the Father over Christ is eternal—it has always been so.

The third eternal aspect of relationship within the Godhead is *fellowship*. In John 1:1 we find that Christ (the Word) is described as being from eternity "with [Greek *pros*] God [the Father]." The Greek word means "toward" or "face to face with." John 1:18 tells us that Christ was "in the bosom of the Father." This beautifully pictures the love and mutual delight that exists between the Father and the Son, being continually maintained by the Holy Spirit. Indeed, someone has described the Holy Spirit as being "the love relationship between the Father and the Son."

Through the gospel, and by the Holy Spirit, God desires to project this divine fellowship into our lives on earth—and, in particular, into our homes. In 1 John 1:3 the apostle presents to us God's invitation to share the eternal fellowship of heaven:

That which we have seen and heard [the record contained in the gospels] we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

We see, then, that heaven provides the eternal pattern of a home, and that in this pattern there are three main aspects of relationship: fatherhood, head-

ship and fellowship. If our homes on earth are to fulfill God's purpose and be successful, they must reproduce these three relationships.

In our society the wife is often referred to as the "homemaker." However, this is true only in a secondary sense. In the economy of God, the man is primarily the homemaker—because he will make it whatever it is to become. The father is the key to the establishment of the home. It is upon his shoulders that God has placed both the responsibility and the authority to establish a home that will fulfill the design of a loving heavenly Father. When the man takes his rightful position, then the woman takes hers beside him as "helper" (Genesis 2:20).

The Chain of Authority

We can begin to see that the husband/wife relationship has an importance that transcends time, in that it is a picture of the eternal relationship between the Father and Christ. Referring back to 1 Corinthians 11:3, we find that there is a very definite chain of authority which originates in the Godhead and is extended into the home. God is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of the man or husband, the husband is the head of the woman or wife.

All authority is derived ultimately from the Father and depends upon a right place in the chain that goes back to Him. Christ has authority because He submits to the Father; the husband has authority because he submits to Christ; the wife has authority because she submits to the husband.

A very wise Roman centurion with a sick servant once came to Jesus to ask for his servant's healing. Since he had observed the life and miracles of Jesus, he introduced himself by saying, "I also am a man *placed under authority*, having soldiers under me" (Luke 7:8). He did not say, as some of us would have done, "I have the authority!" No, he recognized that the authority he had over the soldiers under him depended on the fact that he himself was *under authority*. As a Roman officer, he was a link in a chain of command that went right back to the emperor himself. Thus, anyone who refused to obey the commands of the centurion was, in effect, rejecting the authority of the emperor.

In introducing himself to Jesus, the centurion said, "I *also* am a man placed under authority." Why did he use the word *also*? Because he was comparing himself with Jesus. He recognized the same principle that applied in his own military

command also applied in the spiritual ministry of Jesus. Jesus, too, was "a man placed under authority." Just as the authority of the centurion depended on his relationship to the emperor, so the authority of Jesus depended on His perfect submission to the Father. In every realm the principle is the same: *to have authority, we must be under authority*.

ADAPTED FROM A NEW WINE ARTICLE ENTITLED "FATHERHOOD, PART 1."

FOR FURTHER STUDY, WE RECOMMEND DEREK PRINCE'S MESSAGE ON CD:

GOD'S CHALLENGE TO A NEW GENERATION

We are making this material available to you at no charge. Just use the enclosed reply slip to request your copy.

REPRODUCTION OF ARTICLES FROM THE DPM ARCHIVE FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION IS PERMITTED. TO RECEIVE REGULAR TEACHING AND ENCOURAGEMENT BY E-MAIL, SUBSCRIBE AT DEREKPRINCE.ORG.



DEREK PRINCE MINISTRIES
P.O. Box 19501
CHARLOTTE, NC 28219
704.357.3556
WWW.DEREKPRINCE.ORG

TL071