

# Parents and Children

#0074

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—May 7, 1958

The text is Luke the first chapter, the 17th verse.

“And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” Luke 1:17.

Yes, thank the Lord; somebody’s going to be ready when Jesus comes. He will not find the entire world unready. Most will be, but a few will be ready. And our text brings to view a work of preparation to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

I want to notice this morning more about that work of preparation. You notice it’s said to be in the spirit and power of Elijah. And the first thing that is mentioned is to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and then the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

You notice that there is something about this matter of the relation of parents and children, which enters basically into the preparation for the coming of Jesus. In *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 6*, page 119, I read:

“Those who bear the last message of mercy to the world should feel it their duty to instruct parents in regard to home religion. The great reformatory movement must begin in presenting to fathers and mothers and children the principles of the law of God” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 6*, page 119.

Notice that word “begin.” Now you can’t get back of the beginning. When you go to Genesis 1:1, and you read “In the beginning,” you can’t get any farther back than that. And in this great reformatory movement, which is to make ready a people prepared for the Lord Inspiration, both in the Bible and in the revelations of the Spirit of Prophecy, teaches that the place to begin is with the turning of the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers. And in that order. There is a work that is to be done in the hearts of parents to fit them to stand in their families in the place of God and thus to cooperate with God in making ready a people prepared for the Lord.

I’d like to notice that this is exactly what God wants parents to do.

“What is higher education? No education can be called higher education unless it bears the similitude of heaven, unless it leads young men and young women to be

Christlike, and fits them to stand at the head of their families in the place of God" *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 467.

Now that doesn't mean to be popes. It doesn't mean to be antichrist, sitting in the temple of God showing himself that he is God; it isn't in that sense at all. But God has chosen to delegate some of His authority, some of His power and the responsibility that goes with it to fathers and mothers. He's chosen to do that, and the greatest respect we can show to God is to accept His arrangement in every matter.

Needless to say, we cannot improve on it. Lucifer has been trying that now for 6,000 years; personally, I am not impressed with the showing he's made. Are you? I can't see any system that the Devil has established here on earth that I like. Look over in India or China, look down into Africa or the islands of the sea. Look around us here in American, and tell me, what improvement has the Devil made on God's plan?

Every time that the Devil has changed anything, he's spoiled it. Every time he has made what he calls improvement, it has been a perversion—no improvement to it. The reason for that is very simple: God is infinite, and in His holy law He has expressed His will and "the law of the Lord is perfect," Psalm 19:7. You cannot improve anything that is perfect. If you change it, it is no longer perfect. Consequently, every change that Lucifer has suggested has been degeneration rather than improvement.

But do you know that the Devil has sold his package of goods to the world at large. The world believes, to a greater or lesser extent, that God's way can be improved upon. We are told in Revelation 12:9 that Satan "deceiveth the whole world." I want you to think of what that means, friends; he "deceiveth the whole world."

What does it mean to deceive? To fool you. It means two things. It means to tell a lie, but to tell it in such a way that people *believe* it, otherwise there's no deception. And the Devil is deceiving the whole world; that's what the Bible says. We believe the Bible; we must accept that statement of fact. And may I tell you, friends, that in this matter of the family and the relationship of parents and children, the Devil has deceived the whole world. There's a great reformatory movement that must begin in the home in presenting to fathers, and mothers, and children the principles of the law of God. Dear friends, let us cooperate with God in that reformation. What do you say? Let's do it.

May I say this concerns everyone here this morning? If you're a father, it concerns you. If you're a mother, it concerns you. Children and young people, it concerns you. Older ones who are not parents, it concerns you. You have an influence. What you think affects other lives. There is no escaping it. And it is only as our *thoughts* are changed; it is only as our *attitudes* are brought back into harmony with God's program that we will be ready for the coming of Jesus.

Are you ready for Jesus to come? Oh friends, that this reformation beginning in our hearts and homes may spread and help in this blessed work of making ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Now, I'd like to notice what's involved in this work of reformation that centers in the home, and how much depends upon it. In the book *Ministry of Healing*, page 352, I read of the great potential there is in this:

“The Christian home is to be an object lesson, illustrating the excellence of the true principles of life... Far more powerful than any sermon that can be preached is the influence of a true home upon human hearts and lives”  
*Ministry of Healing*, page 352.

Now we've all heard sermons that stirred our hearts and moved us to decision. We've all thanked God for the ministry of His Word. But I want to tell you something, friends: there is something that has greater power than any sermon. That's what I read to you. What is it? The influence of a true Christian home. That's the greatest sermon that can be preached.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if your home could be like that? It can. God has made full provision for it. All we have to do is accept His principles because, obviously, we can never demonstrate the power of those principles unless it is those *principles* that are being demonstrated in the home.

A successful home, an apparently successful home, without these principles, is a terrible thing. The more successful a home seems to be without these principles, the worse it is. In a sense, we can rejoice in the failure of every home that is built upon wrong principles. Rejoice only in this sense that it may be that some by getting a stomach ache will cease to eat green apples, that some by being scratched by the thorns and the brambles will learn to hate the Devil that causes those things.

No, the kind of home demonstration we need is the demonstration of the true principles. I want to look for a few moments this morning at one of the most successful homes that the Bible tells about. Turn to the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis, and we will read what the Lord said about Abraham:

“And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him” Genesis 18:17–19.

This is the Lord talking about Abraham. Notice that the fulfillment, the wonderful promise, is made to Abraham depended upon Abraham doing certain things. What was it? Commanding his children and his household after him.

And so first of all this morning, I would like to note the work of the father in the Christian household. In *Volume 1*, page 547, I read:

“Every member of the family centers in the father... He is the lawmaker, illustrating in his own manly bearing the sterner virtues, energy, integrity, honesty, and practical usefulness. The father is in one sense the priest of the household, laying upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice, while the wife and children unite in prayer and praise. With such a household Jesus will tarry...” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1*, page 547.

We want Jesus in our homes, don't we? Now, did you notice several things there that are said about the father? What is the father? He's the priest, and he's the lawmaker. He is the center. Every member of the family centers in the father. His name, house band, is a true definition of husband.

Now dear friends, those who are fathers here this morning should magnify their office. They should appreciate the rare privilege, the high honor that God has bestowed upon them. They do not have to boast. After all friends, these statements that I've read, instead of inflating us, should humble us. Instead of causing us to be egotistical and bigoted, they should cause us to cry out to God, realizing that He *alone* can give us what it takes to carry out what is required here.

We are like empty cups, very fine when thirsty people are around, provided that there is a source of water, and the cups get under the spout. Every man who carries these responsibilities in the family must be like that empty cup and going to God and being filled with that which is necessary to carry out this commission. Men, God challenges you to come up to this high and holy responsibility.

Now, in carrying it out, we have some modern trends to work against that are tremendous. Somebody has said that the 18<sup>th</sup> century brought the emancipation of man; the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the emancipation of women, and the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the emancipation of the child. And that statement, viewed from the standpoint of the historian, is probably quite an accurate generalization. The American Revolution that brought freedom to this country, the French Revolution that overturned the throne there, and the influences that were set in motion back there brought freedom to men that they were no longer serfs. In many countries, that was true.

And in the last century the movements for women's suffrage and all that went with it have certainly lifted women far above the place of a slave in many lands and in many homes. And now in recent decades we have certainly witnessed, both in the laws and in the attitudes of the people, a great change toward the child. It used to be that children were considered more or less the property of the father. He could do about as he pleased with them. But today, in some places, it's impossible for a father to exercise very much discipline without being criticized by surrounding people.

The tender hearts of people seem to go out toward the poor little children, and as a result, they are left to grow up pretty much as they please. It's a great kind of charity, queer kind of pity, overlooking as the Devil would have it, the fundamental fact in the plan of God that authority and affection must be blended. God is not dispensing love without discipline. God is not interested in love without law. That's

sentimentalism. The world is full of it today. And in no place do we see a greater demonstration of the futility of Satan's plan than in the home today.

Without authority based upon the mandate of Jehovah, no amount of what is called "love" can be successful in getting people ready for Heaven, or even for success in this world. In the book *Evangelism*, page 582, I read:

"Let authority and affection be blended" *Evangelism*, page 582.

They are the character of God. God is love. 1 John 4:8. But love includes justice as well as mercy. It includes firmness as well as kindness. There is law. There is pardon. But pardon does not set aside law, and love does not set aside justice, and the father, standing in the place of God, is to represent to his family those blended attributes that are seen in their perfection in God alone. Oh friends, what a challenge and what a responsibility.

Now, I want to read this statement again in *Volume 1*, page 547.

"A father must not be as a child, moved merely by impulse. He is bound to his family by sacred, holy ties. Every member of the family centers in the father" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1*, page 547.

I pause to say, I wonder if with all our vaunted progress in civilization, I wonder if this program that takes the father away so much from his home and family, puts him out where he sees neither the wife or the children for many of the waking hours day after day, I wonder friends, if it is designed to make ready a people prepared for the Lord?

How every father should cherish the opportunities to be with the wife and children! How those opportunities should be made the most of!

"Every member of the family centers in the father. His name, "house-band," is the true definition of husband. He is the lawmaker, illustrating in his own manly bearing the sterner virtues, energy, integrity, honesty, and practical usefulness. The father is in one sense the priest of the household, laying upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice, while the wife and children unite in prayer and praise" *Ibid*.

Who should lead out? Whose is the primary responsibility in making the home a *spiritual* home? The father. Do you notice how popular Satan has it that Sunday school is for women and children? That expresses it in one sentence: Sunday school is for women and children. That's what church is for. And the Devil has sold that idea to millions of people. He has pictured religion as something that is, more or less, soft. And a lot of it is soft, friends, even to the point of being mushy.

And what the religious experience of many people need, and many homes need, is exactly what the father, blessed by God, can bring into it. What is it?

“He is the lawmaker, illustrating in his own manly bearing the sterner virtues, energy, integrity, honesty, and practical usefulness” *Ibid.*

Now let me tell you, friends, any man that dares try it has got a battle on his hands, if not in his home, at least in society around, and any man that dared try it is going to be criticized as taking too much authority in his hands. You know, that’s what the people said about Moses in leading the children of Israel. They came and said, “Moses, you take too much on you. The congregation can handle things themselves. They don’t need all your thoughts about it. You’re just taking more on you than you need to. Things would run better without your meddling.”

I want to ask you, friends: Will the wife and children that are imbued with the Holy Spirit, will they oppose or will they welcome the exercise of leadership and authority that God has delegated to the husband and father? Obviously, if they’re being led by the Spirit, they’ll cooperate with him. But if they’re not, they will show either a spirit of defiance or a spirit of subterfuge and evasion. That’s what is wrecking thousands of homes today. If we are to get ready for the coming of Jesus, there must be in every heart a longing to know the will of God, and a cooperation in carrying out that will.

This says that if we will do what I have been reading:

“With such a household Jesus will tarry, and through His quickening influence the parents’ joyful exclamations shall yet be heard amid more exalted scenes, saying: ‘Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me’” *Ibid.*

Oh friends, I want that experience, don’t you? I want to see every family here this morning having that experience.

Now on the verse that we read in Genesis 18, God says, “I know Abraham. I can count on him.” He will do what?

“He will command his children and his household after him” Genesis 18:19.

Now notice, it doesn’t say he will coax them. It doesn’t say he will bribe them. It doesn’t say he will threaten. It doesn’t say he will argue with them. It doesn’t say he will maneuver things around to get them to do what he wants to without them even knowing that they were told to do it. That’s supposed to be the great modern way of dealing with children, you know. Put something they need with something they like so they’ll be sure and eat it; that way they’ll get their minerals and vitamins without any difficulty at all.

It’s very old fashioned today, in fact so old fashioned that some people seem never to have heard it that he should do it *because* he should *obey*. That’s the

doctrine of the Bible. And God is going to have some families today that will demonstrate that principle. Oh friends, I hope that every woman here this morning, every wife and mother will appreciate the importance of recognizing God's plan and giving it full support.

"Ah but," somebody says, "But if father would only be nicer in the way he does it, then it would be easier. But father is so strict and he's even mean about it sometimes. So I think the poor children, they've got to get a little loving from somewhere."

All right, so you're going to give it to them and separate the child from the father. God pity you! Do you remember a serpent that stole into Eden and suggested that God was arbitrary and that he, the serpent, was more interested in their welfare than God was? And there's many a serpent in a home today breaking the home down, breaking it apart with the subtle suggestion, "Bad Daddy, spank baby. Momma won't let him spank baby. Bad Daddy, spank baby. Momma won't let him spank baby."

What kind of influence is that? Sometimes it's worded exactly as I've said it. Other times it isn't worded that way, but that's what it means. And there are a thousand variations on that theme: Bad Daddy, Bad Daddy.

Another variation on it is, "Now we better not tell Daddy about this because he might not like it, but here's some money, and you can do this with it, or here is something you want and you can have it, or here's something you want to do, and we'll arrange it, but we mustn't tell Daddy because he might not like it."

What is that teaching? That is teaching insubordination, which is the very thing that Lucifer lost Heaven over. It's breaking down the foundations of authority.

"Ah but," somebody says, "But Brother Frazee, there are a lot of men even though they may be supposed to stand in the place of God, they are not like God at all."

That's true, friends. They'll have to answer to God for that too. But I want to say to you that even though we do not have perfect fathers, breaking down their authority before the children is not going to improve a bad situation, it's only going to make it worse. Rather let wife and children come close to the father who has burdens and problems, and who may have serious faults and say, "Daddy, we love you, and we're going to help you. We know that God has expected you to lead out, and we're going to cooperate with you. We're going to pray for you. We're going to make your work as easy as possible instead of as hard as possible." God will bless that sort of attitude, my friends. He certainly will.

Now I want to turn over to Ephesians the fifth chapter, and I want to notice some more instructions to fathers:

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having

spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies” Ephesians 5:25–28.

What a wonderful figure, friends, a wonderful symbol, a wonderful illustration. God takes the union of marriage and uses it as the representation of the union between Himself and His church. The husband and father then in exercising the authority of God, must show the love of God. And without that, he can never succeed. Never, never. God forbid that any man should try to be the law-giver without also being the love-maker. Law and love must be combined. Authority must be blended with affection.

In the book *Adventist Home*, page 212, we have a beautiful picture of the father acting in this work, and the mother in his absence. This brings me to the next point, which I am very anxious to make clear this morning, for there are many broken and divided homes in this hour in which we live. When the father is gone, either through death or otherwise, when there is no father in the family, or if he’s away for a week or a day or an hour, whenever the father is not acting, whether it’s permanently or just for an hour, the mother must recognize that she has not only her own place to fill but that of the father too. That’s very important.

The home, in other words, must never be left at loose ends. There must always be a house-band. And God will help the mother to fill that place if the father is not there to fill it. I have a serious question in my own mind: How much God is going to help the wife to fill that place if the husband is there to fill it? But where there’s a need, where the husband is absent, then the mother should at once recognize that she is in charge and should take over the full responsibility of seeing that authority, as well as affection, is being manifested.

*Adventist Home*, page 212. Now, this is similar to the one I read in Volume 1, but it’s a different quotation. And it comes to something that I haven’t read before:

“All members of the family center in the father. He is the lawmaker, illustrating in his own manly bearing the sterner virtues: energy, integrity, honesty, patience, courage, diligence, and practical usefulness. The father is in one sense the priest of the household, laying upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice. The wife and children should be encouraged to unite in this offering and also to engage in the song of praise. Morning and evening the father, as priest of the household, should confess to God the sins committed by himself and his children through the day. Those sins which have come to his knowledge and also those which are secret, of which God’s eye alone has taken cognizance, should be confessed. This rule of action, zealously carried out by the father when he is present *or by the mother when he is absent*, will result in blessings to the family” *Adventist Home*, page 212.



Do you see the point, friends? Here it comes time for the morning sacrifice, but the father is absent. Oh, we have no priest this morning, so we can't have any sacrifice. Is that it? Oh no. The *mother* is appointed by God to go right ahead. She has been delegated to at once take charge, go right ahead. And many a home would never have family worship unless the mother went right ahead. Thank God for mother's who will try with God's help to fill the double place of mother *and* father. And dear women, who have that need, and that opportunity be assured that for you there is a double portion of the Spirit. Never doubt it. God will help you. Wrestle with Him in prayer.

But remember, that calls for you to cultivate not merely the mercy and the tenderness and the longsuffering, and the kindness and the gentleness, but *you*, in a special sense must cultivate the exercise of firmness, authority, strict requirements, it is necessary, you must do it. And God will help you to do it.

“This rule of action, zealously carried out by the father when he is present or by the mother when he is absent, will result in blessings to the family” *Ibid*.

Isn't that wonderful, friends? Isn't that wonderful? So thank God when the father is away as I say, either permanently or temporary, or when because he doesn't know God he cannot and will not take his position as priest of the household, then under any of those circumstances the mother must recognize that she is chosen of God—she is delegated.

Now, what about the children? I want you to look at the Ten Commandments with me for a few moments. They're found in Exodus the twentieth chapter, but you know them by heart. Just suppose that we had them written up here this morning on the two tables. One two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Is that the way they are? Four on the first table, six on the last.

I wonder why there are two tables? Because the law is divided into two parts. The first relates to our duty to God, and the second to our duty to our fellow man. I want you children to notice something very interesting that I am coming to in a minute. Now at the beginning of each table, of course, there's a commandment. Whenever there's a series of things, there's always one that starts it. And God didn't just scatter out the commandments hit and miss. There is a divine sequence and order in the commandments.

The reason the first one is first is because it's first! And the reason that this one over here on the second table is the first is because it's first! Let's look at it for a minute and you'll see what I mean. Repeat the First Commandment with me.

“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me” Exodus 20:3.

Why is that first? Because the first thing to settle in any commandment is who has the authority, who's going to be obeyed. That's the first thing to be settled. And God doesn't purpose to waste His time in speaking any other commandments unless you've first heard and accepted the First Commandment.

“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me” Exodus 20:3.

In other words, do you accept God as of supreme authority? That’s the First Commandment. And if you do, then you’re bound to listen to and obey all the rest. Is that clear? All right. That relates to all ten of them.

But now, let’s go to the Fifth Commandment. We’ve passed now from the duties pertaining directly to God, and we’re dealing with the duties relating to our fellow men. There are millions of people in this world. How shall we relate ourselves to them all? Let me tell you the first thing to settle is where authority lies. Now, will you repeat the Fifth Commandment with me children and everybody else that wants to join in? All the children lead out.

“Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee”  
Exodus 20:12.

Do you see, dear children, the first thing to settle in your dealings with life and the people around you is *where* the authority is. And according to this commandment, it’s where? It’s with father and mother. And you’re to do what? Honor them. That includes obedience, but it includes more than obedience. It includes living a life that brings honor *to* them. It includes not only doing what they say but thinking of what will please them even when they don’t tell you and choosing to do that for Jesus’ sake and their sake.

And dear children whom God is preparing to act a part in His closing work, remember, that concerning those who welcome Jesus, it’s written in Revelation 14:12, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they...” that do what? “Keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Will children be in that group? Will they be keeping the commandments? Will they keep the *Fifth Commandment*? Oh yes. They will bring joy and honor to their parents. For such children, God is waiting.

And so this morning, friends, I am so glad that we can together study deeper into this science of the Christian home where love and law are blended, where authority with affection reigns. Jesus had this attitude toward His earthly parents. Until He was 30 years of age, He was subject to them, bearing the burdens of the home life and helping to support the family. Such a program produced that wonderful character which all the universe marveled at, and such a program will develop characters today that reflect the image of Jesus fully, and through them, God will finish His work.

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