

Christian Men Who Glorify God

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Father's Day! Fathers are important in our society; fathers are important to the church; fathers play an important role in the development of spiritually healthy families. Absent fathers are a societal problem. The church has a responsibility to help develop godly fathers.

Some people struggle to appreciate God as a father because their experience with their own father was negative. In today's world, the church faces important challenges and has great opportunities. The result of a godly father is more godly fathers. We must pray that God will raise up more godly men.

The mission of the church depends on our ability to develop spiritually healthy families with fathers and mothers who model God's plan as they raise spiritually-minded children. The development of future leaders in the church depends on our ability to train men to become spiritual leaders. The mission of God in the local community and the mission of God around the world is tied to reaching men who can be trained to be leaders in their families, the church, the community, and the society.

What are the characteristics of men who glorify God? In these brief notes, I set forth some characteristics of a godly man. The study is from a passage that does not directly speak to fatherhood. In Philippians 2, Paul applauds the Christian example and leadership of two men—Timothy and Epaphroditus. Today I make a specific application to fathers, but the general application is to all men.

A man who glorifies God and leads his own family well is UNSELFISH.

Paul says that Timothy had genuine concern for the wellbeing of the Philippians (2:20-21). Timothy was with Paul on the first visit to Philippi (Acts 16). Timothy had known the Philippian Christians from "day one." The wellbeing Paul mentions is likely as much spiritual as physical. Not only was Timothy unselfishly concerned about the Philippians, Timothy was concerned about Paul's needs. Paul was in prison as he wrote but he was anxious to send Timothy to visit the Philippian church. We see also the level of Paul's concern for the Philippians.

One can hardly read these verses without noticing the contrast with our own culture where most of the messages we receive via the media are urging us to take care of #1. Culture says it is all about me, Christianity says it is not at all about me. Read Phil. 2:1-4—do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, consider others more important than yourself, look to the interest of others. Faithful Christians think first of others and how to meet the needs of others.

A man who glorifies God and leads his own family well is a SERVANT.

Paul writes that Timothy had served in the spread of the gospel (2:22). This statement reflects both a servant heart and a spiritually-focused heart. Timothy's servanthood was visible and verifiable. Timothy's service was constant. He was constantly RWA (ready, willing, and able). While Timothy undoubtedly served in many ways (see 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy), Paul remembers that his service was focused on spiritual realities and the spread of the gospel.

In the contemporary church, many men are ready to participate in the annual men's retreat, a periodic seminar or workshop, or an annual mission trip, but they are not available to serve in the spread of the gospel 24/7/365. A man whose service glorifies God has convictions that drive his daily life – relationship with God in study and prayer, family relationships, friendships, evangelistic contacts, always thinking and praying about God's mission to the world.

A man who glorifies God and leads his is own family well is a faithful STEWARD.

A faithful steward has a healthy understanding of stewardship. Paul writes about both Timothy and Epaphroditus. Both had "stewarded" well their opportunities. Both had used their lives to God's

glory in sharing the gospel and developing churches. Epaphroditus is described as a worker, a soldier, a messenger, and a minister. They were faithful stewards of their time, opportunities, and resources. Their question was not, “How much do I HAVE to give to God?” but “How little do I HAVE to have for self?” How little can I get by with? Stewards are not owners who are obligated to give something back to the Master. All that a steward has belongs to the Master who provides for the needs of the steward.

A man who glorifies God and leads his is own family well is SUPPORTIVE.

Both Timothy and Epaphroditus played important roles in supporting Paul—sharing, serving, brothers, workers together. Both provided support for the churches they worked with.

God’s man provides support and recognizes his own need for a support system. God’s man is a team player. God’s man is supportive of the people in his life – family, friends, coworkers.

A man who glorifies God and leads his is own family well is SACRIFICIAL.

Paul writes that Epaphroditus had nearly died for the work of Christ (2:30). He had risked his life to advance the cause of Christ. The sacrificial example of a godly man will bring his family closer to God.

To summarize, a man who glorifies God and leads his is own family well is STRONG AND SPIRITUAL.

God’s man is more interested in others than in self. He is concerned about the spiritual wellbeing of others. An unselfish servant, he uses every resource at his disposal to advance kingdom things. He understands that stewardship gives everything back to the benevolent Master who gives us what we need. God’s man sacrifices himself for the good of his family, the church, and God’s spiritual family.

I remember a song from my youth: “Rise Up, O Men of God!” Men of all ages, whether you are fathers or not, today is a day to rise up and be God’s men in God’s kingdom. There has never been a time in history when there was a greater need for Christian men who glorify God.