



General Topics :: Ungodly sons of godly fathers and vice-versa

Ungodly sons of godly fathers and vice-versa - posted by savannah, on: 2009/2/22 9:41

One of the most emotional subjects and the closest to our hearts is that of sons and fathers. Parents have much invested in their children and they occupy an important part of our being. We would gladly give our lives for our children, our love for them is so deep and profound. Indeed, children present a great challenge and responsibility (Eph. 6: 4). Children are presented in the Bible as a blessing and delight (Ps. 127: 3-5). They genetically represent us and continue our seed after we cease the activities of this world. There are many extant false notions regarding children. Not only are these beliefs erroneous, but they are also such that often add to the heartache and grief sometimes associated with children. These beliefs are rampant within and without the Lord's church and characteristic of all types of people. We shall observe some Bible truths about children and also challenge some of the false beliefs by considering some godly sons of ungodly fathers and some ungodly sons of godly fathers. Does it appear that I have made a mistake in my wording and grouping? Should it have only been, godly sons of godly fathers and ungodly sons of ungodly fathers? Many believe that children absolutely are what they are taught and what they see as a role model. The Bible does emphatically teach the immense importance of godly parenting, please do not misunderstand me. If children are simply and only a product of parental influence, then children would not be responsible for how they turn out as adults, the parents would shoulder total responsibility. However, the Bible presents children ("adults") as responsible and answering for themselves.

Godly sons and ungodly fathers. To the surprise and astonishment of many, the Bible presents the scenario of godly sons and ungodly fathers.

Josiah, the son of Amon is an example of a godly son of an ungodly father. Josiah stands out in Bible history as one of the most eminent kings of Judah. Josiah was eight years old when he began his "reign" (2 Kgs. 22: 1). Josiah was an unusually righteous and godly man (2 Kgs. 22: 2). Josiah addressed idolatry and made sweeping reforms (2 Kgs. 23). Both Josiah's grandfather and his father, though, were infamously wicked (2 Kgs. 21: 16-18; 18, 20-22).

Hezekiah was a godly son of a wicked father. Hezekiah was the second righteous king to reign over Judah. We read of his reign in 2 Kings 18. Hezekiah was a great and godly man. However, as spiritually great as Hezekiah was, his father, Ahaz, was ungodly (2 Kgs. 16: 2, 4).

The Bible records the fact and deeds of Asa, the son of Abijam (2 Chroni. 12: 16, 1 Kgs. 15: 8). Asa was Judah's first righteous king (1 Kgs. 15: 8, 11-14). The amazing matter is how Asa was so godly while his father, Abijam, was so wicked (1 Kgs. 15: 3).

King Saul became one of the saddest records and examples of a tormented failure, but Saul had a godly son, Jonathan. Unlike his hardened and ungodly father, Jonathan was a special person, caring and sensitive (1 Sam. 18: 1, 3, 19: 2, 4, 5, 20: 4, 9). Saul, to the converse, was denounced as a spiritual rebel (1 Sam. 15: 26).

Ungodly sons of godly fathers. About the time some are perhaps about to accept the concept of godly sons of ungodly fathers, we shall inject the matter of ungodly sons of godly fathers, perhaps a more challenging scenario.

Regarding Ahaz we read, "And he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God, like David his father... (Jotham was literally the father of Ahaz, 2 Kgs. 15: 38,) but... made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen... and he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree..." (2 Kgs. 16: 2-4). The wicked behavior of Ahaz is in sharp contrast with the godly life of his father, Jotham (2 Kgs. 15: 33, 34). We read thus of Jotham: "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord..." (2 Kgs. 15: 34, 32-34).

Mannasseh was one of the most wicked men mentioned in the Bible and, yet, his father was the godly Hezekiah. Mannasseh has gone down in history as probably being the worst king to ever reign over Judah (2 Kgs. 21: 1-7, 11, 12, 16). The wicked deeds of Mannasseh are both aggressive and reprehensible to the point that most would think that surely Mannasseh had to have had a terrible childhood that promoted and nurtured degeneracy. However, it would be difficult to read of a more righteous father than Hezekiah (2 Kgs. 18: 5-7).

A more dedicated and righteous prophet and judge than Samuel is not seen in the Bible and, yet, Samuel had two of

the most wicked sons, Joel and Abijah. Joel and Abijah did the unthinkable by taking bribes and perverting justice (I Sam. 8: 2-5). Notwithstanding, the virtuous nature of Samuel is not questioned or marred (I Sam. 16, Ps. 99: 6, Heb. 11: 32).

Another ungodly son of a godly father is seen in Esau and Isaac. Esau frivolously sold his birthright, which resulted in enormous consequences (Gen. 25: 27-34, Heb. 12: 16, 17). However, Isaac is consistently presented as spiritually stable (Matt. 22: 32, Heb. 11: 20, Gal. 4: 21-31). The fact of the matter is, there are more ungodly sons of godly fathers mentioned in the Bible than godly sons of ungodly fathers.

What we have seen in the foregoing is consistent with the teaching of Ezekiel 18: 20:

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." (The prophet mentions the godly father and ungodly son and the ungodly father and godly son situations that precipitated the statement in verse twenty, see vs. 5-13; 14-18).

While the Bible teaches environment and physical heredity as of great importance, the Bible also shows that men can and often do rise above a spiritually disadvantageous background. To the contrary, some reject all the spiritual advantages that were offered to them by their parents. Parents and children each have their respective responsibilities and each must give an account (Eph. 6: 1, 4).

Many a godly parent has gone to their grave sorrowing over a child that did not turn out as desired. To compound their grief, some have unjustly blamed themselves. Some are heard charging, "if the children do not turn out to be Christians, it is the parent's fault, they have failed!" Beloved, it could be that the parents will give an account and are part of the failure, however, this conclusion that fault must automatically be assumed is faulty and even sinful.

Eli and Samuel constitute a good model for study. Eli and Samuel both had sons who turned out badly. In the case of Eli, we read: "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not" (I Sam. 3: 13, cp. 2: 12-17). Eli is held accountable for the conduct of his children because he had failed to exercise parental duties.

Samuel's sons were also a great disappointment and spiritual hindrance to the cause of God. We read of Samuel's sons: "And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes and perverted judgment" (I Sam. 8: 3). While Samuel's sons were a manifest hindrance, Samuel was not held responsible for their conduct and he continued to be used by God (I Sam. 8ff.).

Not only do the binding of extreme views add to the hurt already experienced by grieving parents, but such views often disrupt whole churches. Godly elders are sometimes told, "You must resign because your thirty year old child denounced Christ!" Such views are usually a misunderstanding of "faithful children" and "ruleth well his own house" (Tit. 1: 6, I Tim. 3: 4, I believe "faithful children" in Titus 1: 6 is tantamount to "ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity" in I Timothy 3: 4. Hence, "faithful children" is referring to the father's rule and the children's subjection, therefore, "faithful children" does not mean "Christians," as such). The overseer must indeed rule his own house (control and superintend), but this "rule" does not mean that he can order, demand, and make his children form a saved relationship with Christ, no more than he can order, demand, and make the members where he serves maintain a saved relationship (see I Tim. 3: 4, 5). This rule pertains to his house or his children who are under his immediate rule, those at home.

As parents, we must examine our nurturing and ourselves. Bringing a child into this world is a great spiritual responsibility that demands much prayer, thought, and provision, both material and spiritual. One of the worse things that I can imagine as a parent is to see one of my children be told on that "Great Day," "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25: 41). However, even worse would be the realization that I contributed to their rejection by failing to responsibly exercise my duties as a parent. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath," wrote Paul, "but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6: 4).

Addendum: The Proverb containing the statement, "Train up a child in the way (literally, "a way,") he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it" is what scholars call a general Proverb (there are proverbs that are absolute and allow no exception, see Proverbs 6:32). Proverbs 22:6 falls into the same category as, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord" (Prov. 18:22). While Proverbs 18:22 is often true, there are recognized exceptions, Proverbs 21:9. In like manner, Proverbs 22:6 is not meant to be understood as an absolute statement, containin

g no exceptions to the rule. To apply 22:6 allowing no exceptions creates a circumstance of ineludible biblical contradiction.

Re: Ungodly sons of godly fathers and vice-versa - posted by White_Stone (), on: 2009/2/22 11:46

Dear savannah,

This is good advice and I find the following part to be comforting.

Quote:
-----If children are simply and only a product of parental influence, then children would not be responsible for how they turn out as adults, the parents would shoulder total responsibility. However, the Bible presents children ("adults") as responsible and answering for themselves.

Kindest regards,
white stone

Re: Ungodly sons of godly fathers and vice-versa - posted by White_Stone (), on: 2009/2/22 17:24

Hi Savannah,

Could I please ask, where did this material come from? It is so very well written I would like to read more by the Author.

Thanks,
white stone

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2009/2/24 5:16

Dear Savannah,

Thank you for this much needed balanced input. I have often considered the same issues and how easy it is for some to give 'blanket' messages that say children will not depart from the faith if they are parented correctly.

God bless those who have bought up their children who have remained faithful to their Lord. This is indeed a blessing and we DO need instruction on Godly parenting today.

However there are many who have done their best to raise their children in the Lord, but much to the anguish of their hearts have seen them depart from following the way of righteousness. I have heard many Godly preachers (including one on SI) tell of children in their teenage years go astray, before returning to follow the God of their parents. This is also my experience and while I can admit that there is a lot I could have done better as a parent, I did all I knew how at the time.

Praise God for His great grace that He does not give us what we deserve, but chooses in His mercy to draw back the prodigals!! :-)

Re: Ungodly sons of godly fathers and vice-versa - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/2/24 8:44

Very good article. I would like to make a few comments.

Quote:
-----Many a godly parent has gone to their grave sorrowing over a child that did not turn out as desired. To compound their grief, some have unjustly blamed themselves. Some are heard charging, "if the children do not turn out to be Christians, it is the parent's fault, they have failed!" Beloved, it could be that the parents will give an account and are part of the failure, however, this conclusion that fault must automatically be assumed is faulty and even sinful.

If it were true that if a child strays and it is totally the parents fault, one must then conclude it was God's fault that Adam

and Eve sinned!! or that is why Lucifer fell: God's fault! What these incidents demonstrate is that God made angels and man with a free will, just like He himself is: He can chose and so he imparted this trait to men and angels. It also demonstrates that a person/child can placed in a perfect environment and still rebel.

About Manasseh: in 2 Chron. 33: 10-20 records his conversion. I am not aware the Scriptures records the conversion of a man as wicked as him. He was the epitome of wickedness and then in proper time, God caused the man to suffer tremendously- the enemy led him away by putting hooks in his nose, bound him with bronze chains, and led him away to Babylon. Then in his distress he called out to God...this story is one of awe at how God can change a person...

Yes, these OT stories teach us much about human nature and how God works - much inspiration there.

Blessings,
ginnyrose