

Baby “B”

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Genesis 2:18-23

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It’s Father’s Day, and for me this day is filled with lots of memories. I can still remember those words my father often spoke to me . . . “Don’t make me stop this car!” I remember setting in the back seat of our station wagon with my two sisters, singing, as we traveled down the road . . . “Don’t touch me”. And I remember playing tag with my father . . . dodging his swinging hand as he reached around the seat of the car trying to get me to behave. Well, one day I became a father, and I was able to pass down these fond memories to my children as well.

Probably the first time Fatherhood really hit home for me was about 18 or 19 years ago. When Heather was still very young, we bought her a Cabbage Patch doll named Bianca. We called her Baby “B”. Baby “B” went everywhere with Heather. One day we pulled into a favorite Fast Food restaurant of ours that served the good fried chicken. We’d stopped there often and would typically order the same thing from the menu. As always, Heather asked for Baby “B”, so I gathered the doll from the back seat while Carolyn and Heather headed for a booth. As I stood there at the counter to order our food, the young woman that took my order kept giving me this strange look. It was then that I realized Baby “B” was still tucked under my arm. “It’s my daughter’s,” I quickly explained, and pointed to my family across the room. I didn’t realize this is what it meant to be a father.

What does it mean to be a father? Well, I could probably spend most of our time this morning sharing what the experts say works best, but understanding fatherhood runs far deeper than simply passing along a few facts and clever anecdotes. I believe fatherhood (or being a husband or a man) carries with it a responsibility that is far deeper than most of us men realize. We men and fathers and husbands have responsibilities that have been assigned to us by God.

First, there is a certain attitude we must have about the women and girls in our lives that reflects God’s attitude. Consider God’s feelings toward the woman He first created. **18 Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” 19 So the Lord God formed from the ground**

all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. ²⁰ He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him. ²¹ So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the Lord God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. ²² Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, and He brought her to the man. ²³ "At last!" the man exclaimed. "This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken from 'man.' " ¹ (Genesis 2:18-23)

Isn't it interesting that after God had created everything there still was no helper just right for Adam, the first man. So in His wisdom God creates Eve and, get this, He brought her to the man. They say that there is joy in the giving, so I can just picture the heart of God as He brought this woman to this man. Here was a woman who would be just what this man needed. And in the eyes of God she was something holy and sacred; His priceless treasure. Men, I believe we have a responsibility to see the women and girls in our lives just as God does, as His creation. But sadly, some men don't.

I think we've all met men who treat their cars and their tools with more tenderness and care than they treat the women in their lives. Even the stranger at the hardware store is given more courtesy than their wives or children. No book or workshop or seminar will change this behavior. What they need to do is see the women in their lives as someone who is near and dear to our Lord's heart. Paul reminds the Christians living in Ephesus that "we are God's masterpiece." ² (Ephesians 2:10) And men, I believe we need to remember this as we gaze into the faces of the women and children in our lives.

I believe God expects more than this attitude though. Being a man or a husband or a father goes way beyond our thoughts. This attitude should carry over into our actions as well. That woman you have married, the child in the back seat of

¹Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"-- Wheaton, Ill.

²Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"-- Wheaton, Ill.

your car, or the girl whose hand you hold is sacred in the eyes of God, and we should be treating them accordingly.

About 13 years ago, I started attending the Promise Keepers events geared toward men. Enthused at what was taught, I started proudly wearing my tee shirt that promoted this ministry. One day a man pulled me aside in a parking lot appalled that I would be promoting a ministry that taught the oppression of women. It was obvious he only knew what the news media had told him, so I showed him what was plastered on the back of the shirt. It was this scripture from Ephesians 5. **²⁵For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her ²⁶to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. ²⁷He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.** ³ (Ephesians 5:25-27) I asked the man what he thought this meant. He didn't have a clue. Most men don't. They don't realize the immensity of their responsibility toward woman. As a husband, a father, and a man, we have a responsibility commanded to us by God to not only see the ladies in our lives as precious and holy, but to treat them in such a way that either keeps them that way or makes them better; more holy and more sacred than the day we first met them. And men, we are the ones that must be sacrificing ourselves for the good of the women and children in our lives.

What does it mean to be a father? How should we be raising our children? I could go on and on, quoting you facts and statistics about what affect fathers have on their children. I could tell you what the experts have to say. But I believe these two things, seeing children, and mothers, and girls as holy and sacred. And doing what we can to help them become more holy and sacred every day. These two things are the foundations we need to be the father, the husband, and the man God created us to be. The way I see it, if God's attitude toward His children can be summed up in these words from Zephaniah (**He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.** ⁴ Zephaniah 3:17) then perhaps we need to feel the same about the people in our lives as well.

³Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Wheaton, Ill.

⁴*New American Standard Bible : 1995 update*. 1995 (Zep 3:14-17). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.