

Happy Father's Day...even if you're not one!

Happy Father's Day! Not only to those men who are fathers, but to men everywhere. You don't have to have biologically produced a child to be a father figure. Father's come in the form of grandfather, stepfathers, uncles, brothers, cousins, neighbors and even the guy at the grocery store. On occasion, even mothers are fathers.

The bible provides instructions for fathers in Ephesians 6:4...

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (KJV)

What does that mean exactly?

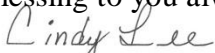
The Cambridge dictionary defines "*nurture*" as a verb meaning "to feed and care for a child, or to help someone or something develop by encouraging that person or thing". Encouraging a child is one of the most important aspects of being an adult of either gender. However, even in this modern era, men seem to carry more weight than women do in this aspect. Boys become like the men that are around them, while girls are subject to choosing a mate by looking at how the men around them behave.

That may sound a little archaic, but it's the bottom line. Encourage a young man or woman to be loving, forgiving and steadfast in the Lord and he or she will grow up with self-respect and will be respected by others. How can a child grow up if there is no self-respect? How can a man be a husband and father? How can a woman be a wife and mother?

Also defined by the Cambridge dictionary is "*admonition*": "a piece of advice that is also a warning to someone about their behavior". That does not mean screaming in the face of a teenager who is out past curfew, it means explaining the consequences of their choice to do so. Define the expectation. "John, your curfew is 11:00 tonight." Assign the consequence. "If you are late, you will not be allowed to go out with your friends for a week." If the child comes home late, no need to scream, simply state the consequence and enforce it. "John, you are an hour late getting in. You know that means you can't go out with your friends for a week".

With nurture and admonition, a child will learn to make choices that will gain respect from others. This, in turn, will bolster their own self-respect.

You don't have to be a father to do this; you only need to care about those in the younger generation around you. Consider this...you never know when a young person may actually be listening to you!

Blessing to you always,

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