

What Do I Want For My Grown Children?

This past Thursday was the twentieth year of my father's passing into Heaven. My heart goes out to those who had ungodly fathers growing up. For instance, when a man lives an ungodly life, the basic learning we receive from him is what *not* to be in our life. It is very sad, because rather than venerating the memory, some who desire to live Christian lives actually try to forget the effect of that unholy lifestyle. We cannot divorce our deeds from who we are. So whether it is planned or not, the person who did not walk before his family in honesty, faithfulness, character and integrity is often marginalized in memory. It would serve each and every one of us well to ask ourselves, are we leaving behind precious memories or painful memories?

On the other hand, I was blessed to have a very godly father. I did not realize how powerful the influence of a godly father is until mine died. My dad has become so much more a part of my life since he has died. Through the years I have asked myself, what would Dad do? How would Dad respond? What would Dad say? Where would Dad go? I had enough working knowledge of his lifestyle that I already knew the answers, I just needed to know how to implement that perceived wisdom into my life.

This truth really came home recently when one of my grown children came right out and said, "Dad, I want to please you." For most everyone reading these words, we want nothing but the best for our kids. So as the years advance and I realize much time has passed between when my father died and now, if God is as generous with my years as He was with Dad, I have about two decades of time to finish off my sphere of influence; I must give it my best shot. Solomon said, "*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest*" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Returning to the statement of my grown child, "Dad, I want to please you," I bring this thought for your contemplation: "What do I want for my grown children?"

1. I want them (every one of them) to meet me in heaven.

God has no grandchildren. I have reminded my kids of this time and time again. All four of them and their spouses have professed faith in Christ. Frankly, their mom and I would have never approved their marriages without the assurance that both partners were committed believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we read the Scriptures, we see the people like Simon Peter who had lapses with his spiritual progress, yet great revivings, because he was truly a believer. Yet, in horror we read of Judas Iscariot, who was a professing, but not a possessing follower of the Lord. And so, even now with our kids, at reunions I will occasionally check them out. "*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*" (II Corinthians 13:5). I long to arrive in Heaven knowing that my children are following me there.

2. I want them to have a deep, personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

I don't want my kids to get to heaven by the mere skin of their teeth. I want them saved and walking with the Lord. The question is as pertinent today as it was when asked by our risen Lord, "... *Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? ...*" (John 21:15). I want my kids to look like fanatics in the eyes of a mediocre Christianity that stands for nothing, falls for most anything and wouldn't die for anybody's cause. The key to living above that kind of existence is to have a great one-on-one relationship with Christ. Devout prayer life and private Bible

reading and meditation nurture this. For Jesus said, *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”* (John 15:5).

3. I want them attending and serving a church of like faith and order.

I want my kids to be saved and obedient to the Lord. This means baptized after their profession. Baptism is immersion. It is not sprinkling or pouring. Jesus was immersed. *“And straightway coming up out of the water...”* (Mark 1:10). I don’t want them in a church that adheres to paedo-baptism (infant baptism). Baptism is not baptism unless it occurs after salvation. *“...See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”* (Acts 8:37). By the way, the next verse says, *“...and they went down both into the water...and he baptized him.”* (Acts 8:38). You don’t have to go into a sprinkling font, if you are getting a little moisture on the head.

I don’t want my kids rearing their kids in a church where works for salvation is taught directly or indirectly. The Bible says, *“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”* (Romans 11:6). If a child is reared up to believe it is grace plus something other than the finished work of Jesus, they may attempt to know the Lord, but fail just short of saving faith because they did not put total trust in Jesus alone for salvation. To trust yourself or anybody or anything else plus Jesus is not salvation.

I want my kids to have a pastor who believes the Bible is the Word of God. I want them to adhere to a faith that believes in the Holy Trinity, the Deity of Christ, faithfulness to God’s House and holy living.

4. I want them to stay married.

I told each of our four kids I married that this is the only marriage I shall perform for them. Marriage is a covenant of and with God. Marriage is intended for keeps. *“Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”* (Matthew 19:6). I want them to stay married, not just because Dad said it, but because God commands it. And in truth, they will be blessed by working through any difficulties and keeping their vows to God and each other.

5. I want I want them to live Spirit-controlled lives.

The Bible commands us to *“...be filled with the Spirit”* (Ephesians 5:18). I don’t want my kids enslaved and controlled by any substance or person. This is one reason I still believe in total abstinence from alcohol or any harmful, shameful substance. I don’t want my kids in pornography, hard spirits, beer, wine, dope or tobacco of any kind. These are all enslaving and not honoring to Christ. In the wholesome sense, I want my kids to be modest in dress, drink nothing stronger than Dr. Pepper, Coke, tea or coffee, and to rear their kids in a smoke-free unpolluted environment. It is true, there are advertisements and even the best of our air has pollutants, but what I am asking my kid is don’t be a contributor to moral, emotional or spiritual pollution. Be different. Be Christ-like. Be controlled by God and raise up a solution of right in a polluted sin-cursed world gone wrong!

To be continued next week.

- Pastor Pope -

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