

How to Be Happy, Even Though You're a Preacher's Kid!

This past week I spoke for Pastor Ben Turner in Vancouver, British Columbia. Record –breaking snow fell while I was with them. We had a cozy time in the majestic city surrounded by snow-covered mountains. It was a beautiful time of fellowship as pastors from all over the Vancouver area gathered to hear the Word. On Tuesday morning the crowd consisted predominantly of these pastors and their families. As I looked in the faces of preacher's kids from five to eighteen years of age, I was moved to extemporaneously speak on the subject of how to be a happy preacher's kid. I have never spoken on this subject, but since flying back home to Houston, I found it hard to get off my mind. So I thought I would share some of the thoughts with you today.

I feel qualified to write on this subject, since I was born into a preacher's home and my wife and I have had the privilege of rearing four preacher's kids. If you noticed, I have entitled this discourse, *How to Be Happy, Even Though You're a Preacher's Kid*. Sadly, there are some things that come to preacher's kids that can discourage us. Allow me to list a few. As a rule, the rules in a preacher's household are stricter than others and our peers sometimes kid us about this. So, sometimes in order to look like we're normal, we'll be tempted to "kick up our heels" to fit in. Then we feel really guilty because we've made our parents look bad. We love them, we didn't mean to hurt them, but we did. It is trying when we are expected to be perfect simply because we are the child of a preacher. Secondly, we are tempted to be discouraged because often, especially in the early stages of our dad's ministry, funding is not superfluous. We see our mom and dad sacrifice to get the Lord's work up and going. We admire them even when we are young, but some things just hurt. I pastored one preacher's daughter many years ago and one day I visited her in the hospital. She was very sick, but what made her cry was astounding. In a cathartic moment she by-passed her physical pain and with tears coming down her cheeks she told me of a time in her youth when Easter was coming and they had no money for new clothes. Other church members had given her and her siblings some hand me downs. She proudly put on her new "hand me downs" for Easter. She went to the back of the church waiting for her father to compliment her and suddenly, her little world caved in as the other girls walked by in their new dresses and her dad complimented them. Then she sobbed as she said, "Daddy didn't say a word about how I looked that day." I cannot judge what was going on in the mind of that preacher. But I do know that there was a confused preacher's girl. Every preacher and preacher's kid will know what I am about to say is true. Thirdly, when trouble comes or people leave the church for reasons that are not positive, we take it very personally. When trials like this hit the church, around the preacher's dinner table it's like the last supper as we question, "Lord, is it I?" As a child, I remember the sadness of being separated from best friends. I saw the same thing happen to my own children. Fourthly, hypocrisy becomes magnified. It is at those times we must keep our eyes on Jesus.

For those who are not preacher's kids, but your parents are very involved in church work, this article will apply just as well. So we might say, *How to Be Happy, Even Though Your Parents Are Serving the Lord*.

1. Obey your parents.

Every kid should do this but it is required of the pastor's child. Here's the biblical mandate for pastors: *"One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)"* (I Timothy 3:4, 5). And remember, this means doing right when dad and mom are not around; this is the essence of character. My dad referred to this as obedience to the unenforceable.

In some people's minds, if the preacher's kids can do it, it's okay.

2. Don't become bitter.

The Bible warns, *"...lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled"* (Hebrews 12:15). When disappointments come, don't play the blame game. If you hang around the holy place and see unholy people who are supposed to be holy, look to Jesus. As my mom said to me when I spotted some hypocrisy, "Johnny, if you look at man, he'll always let you down; you've got to look at Jesus. He'll never disappoint you." And He has not!

Remember you are at church to serve the Lord, not man.

3. Own the faith.

Brother Roloff used to say, "Borrow my convictions until you get your own." We had better get our own convictions eventually - borrowed ones rarely last. One of our goals in a youth conference we are hosting, the Lord willing in March, 2007 is to get young men to "own the faith." *"...That ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"* (Jude 3).

It's not real, until it's personal! So make it personal by reading your Bible on your own and dig until you get something from God. *"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law"* (Psalm 119:18). Make it personal by praying in real time to a real God. *"My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up"* (Psalm 5:3). Speak up for Christ when God gives you opportunity. *"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so..."* (Psalm 107:2).

When young Joash became king, the Bible says, *"And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king"* (II Kin 11:12). When he sat upon the throne and had the crown placed upon his head, they also gave him the testimony, which was the Word of God. In England, the custom of giving the Bible on coronation day and proclaiming, "God save the King" came from this passage of Scripture. In a very real sense, when we take the Bible and own our faith we begin to live royally. *"And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen"* (Revelation 1:6). We will be happy though a preacher's kid, when we realize we are His child, which makes us the King's kid!

- Pastor Pope -

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