BIBLICAL • FAMILY • MINISTRIES

Friend of the Family

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Family Issues

Dr. Allen Griffith



In this article, I want to return to God's commentary on Abraham as a father, including the success he would have as his children grew to adulthood. Before going back to Genesis 18, I want to reference Proverbs 23:26. It is the invitation of a godly father to his son. The text says, *"My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."*

Here is a father appealing to the deepest part of his son's being. He is not challenging mind, emotions, or actions. He is going after the heart. If a father can win his child's heart, he will have tremendous influence on him. After asking for the trust of the heart, he invites the child to examine and follow his ways. The father who says, *"Do as I say, not as I do,"* has no credibility. The father of Proverbs 23 seeks the opportunity to personally disciple his child.

Abraham was not perfect as a man or as a father, but the Lord told of his spiritual success before Isaac was born. In our last article, we noted that Abraham's children would "*keep*" the way of the Lord. They would not simply walk the path of God. They would protect and defend it. There has never been so great a need as there is today for such children. The continuing statement made regarding Abraham's children in Genesis 18:19 was, they would keep the way of the Lord—*"to do justice and judgment."*

I want to pick up where we left off last time. I want my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren *"to do justice and judgment."* Justice speaks of virtue, rightness, morality, straightness and rectitude. To choose to do right can be costly in many ways. We acknowledge that sometimes it is difficult to be sure what is a right view, opinion or action. When we know what is right, however, we must stand up for it in word, attitude and action. It is hard to stand for right when you have to stand alone, but such character is demanded for those who want to walk with God. Oh, that our children would have and demonstrate such a testimony.

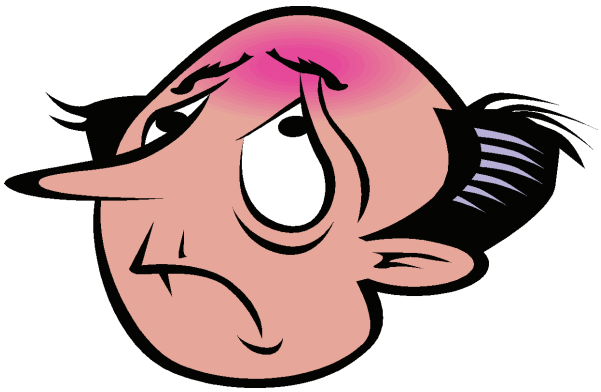
The final commentary made by the Lord regarding Abraham's children and household is that they would do "*judgment*." The term speaks of the ability to issue a verdict or a formal decree. In simple terms, it means they would be discerning. We are bombarded today with compromise, confusion and error. It abounds spiritually, morally, politically, along with perversion of the biblical message.

It is hard to imagine what our families will face in the years ahead. It is encouraging to think what fathers can do to make a difference. None of us know what the future will hold, but by God's grace, we will someday gather with love in heaven, the circle unbroken and joy beyond measure. Nothing on this earth is worth losing the most precious treasure imaginable—the children given and entrusted to us by our Heavenly Father.

More next time. ***Lord, please help us!***

P.O. Box 72146, Thorndale, PA 19372 • Ph: (717) 304-0269 • E-mail: EAGBFM@Comcast.net
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Trends & Troubles



Where is the father? I ask that question often when I hear of young people struggling with life or even getting in trouble with the Law. So, where are they? Many men have "fathered" children but then walked away from the obligation to know them, love them and lead them to a meaningful, godly life.

The statistics are heartbreaking. There are approximately 74.6 million children in the United States today between the ages of 0–17. From 0–5, there are about 22.9 million. From 6–11, there are about 25.5 million. From 12–17, there are about 26.2 million. Of that total number, approximately 31.6 million live without their father. That equals 43%. The U.S. has a higher rate of children living in a single-parent home than any other nation in the world. And it is with little surprise to note that 80% of single-parent homes are led by a single mother. This is a disgrace that underlies most of the problems that young people face in America.

It is also no surprise that 71% of high school dropouts come from fatherless homes. 71% of pregnant teen girls come from fatherless homes. 90% of homeless and runaways are from fatherless homes. 60% of teen suicides are committed by the fatherless. 41% of children born today are born out of wedlock. Children without a father are more likely to struggle with low self-esteem, anxiety, withdrawal, depression, mood disorders and serious mental health issues.

Some will try to justify individual situations, but nothing will justify this family disaster in our Country. It is time for men to step up. Every man is answerable to God, and every man must try to right the wrongs, whatever they are.

Let's broaden our perspective. About 1–1.2 million young people drop out of school every year. We pointed out above that 71%, totaling as many as 852,000, are from fatherless homes. That means 29%, totaling 348,000, come from homes where there is a father present. Where is the father?

About 2,000 young people commit suicide every year. 1,200 of those young people come from fatherless homes. That means 800 of them come from homes where a father is present. The statistics are a disgrace to America.

Stern words are given in Scripture. Fathers are accountable. What the Bible says should stir the heart of every man who has fathered a child. Exodus 34:7, *"…visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and to the fourth generation."*

Every one of us men better get on our knees with tender confession of sin to cry out for the mercy of God upon the precious ones who now live and may live after we are gone. Beg God that all will come to Christ and live for Him in spite of our failures.



Nathan was a prophet and an advisor to David. He encouraged David to build the Temple but had to tell him the LORD said no. David had shed much blood, so his desire was rejected. That was a challenge for Nathan, but greater difficulty came when Nathan had to confront David about his wicked sin with Bathsheba.

Nathan told David of a rich man who had many flocks and a poor man with one little ewe lamb. When a traveler came to visit the rich man, rather than sacrificing one of his many sheep, the rich man took the one lamb of the poor man.

David was furious at the thought of the rich man's actions. Nathan looked at David and said, *"Thou art the man!"* He had courage to speak the truth when it could have cost him everything.

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Prescription For The Family

Stability for a family is founded on a solid marriage for Mom and Dad, based on the directives and principles of the Word of God. God designed marriage to last for a lifetime. Sadly, many marriages end in divorce. I fear many individuals are not ready for the challenges and pressures that come to married couples. Those problems come from within and without, but they come to all. No one is exempt.

I often illustrate with this simple thought. When you got married, you made commitments to your mate. You probably said something like, *"For better or for worse."* What were you expecting? No doubt you were anticipating BETTER. No one I have ever met told me that when they said *"for better or for worse,"* they were expecting a disaster. But when you said "for better or for worse," what did you really mean? Better and worse are intended to represent extreme possibilities. In reality, when we get married, we are expressing the fact that we really don't know what is going to happen. It is the same with *"richer or poorer"* and "in sickness or in health." No one knows what the future will hold.

In spite of the uncertainty, we seal the marriage vows with this incredible conclusion—*"Till death do us part."* That does not seem to mean much to a whole lot of people today, but that promise and commitment actually means everything. It is the commitment the Lord Jesus had in mind in Matthew 19:6. *"…What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."*

Every married couple faces difficulties. We hurt each other and fail each other. Forgiveness is a must. Earning trust is critical. Whatever the test may be must be passed because we made a commitment for life. God did the joining, not the preacher, and God was the witness to what we promised. Divorce is a destroyer of life and family.

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From Under the Umbrella

By Patricia E. Griffith

WOW! It is fast approaching the end of the year and zooming toward 2027. How quickly our time on earth is lessening! God is so very good and cares for His children, as He has promised! We've had a precious year serving our Savior and are gearing up for the New Year.

However, I love Thanksgiving and the wonderful Christmas season. It is such a time to tell others of God's love for them and the wonderful redemption plan He has provided for all those who trust Christ as Savior! Life is so busy, but we can't miss any opportunity to proclaim God's plan of salvation to a lost and dying world.

John 3:16–17 – *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."*

We wish you a very blessed Christmas and New Year!

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We wish rich blessing to you and yours as we celebrate the Savior's birth

Every year we rejoice over the first coming of our Savior. Few knew or understood what was happening or what it meant for the world. The child was born—the son was given.

We are so blessed to remember, and now stirred to think that He will come again. Once more, few will know or understand what will happen and what it will mean to the world. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Biblical Family Ministries, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Christian ministry established in 1993 to present the Bible's teaching on marriage, family, child training, and other Biblical topics. Dr. E. Allen Griffith and his wife, Patricia, work together in this ministry located in Pennsylvania. They are assisted by Kimberly Schmelzer.