

No Grandchildren

There is nothing like the influence of godly parents in the life of a child. Still being somewhat new at this "father" thing, I am struck with the awesome responsibility of parenthood. Knowing that I will have a great influence on how my children turn-out is an almost mind-boggling thing to think about. It is almost expected that a child will accept the religious ideas that a parent teaches them. What a task, to bring up your children *"in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."*

When all is said and done, however, we still must understand the individual responsibility in our lives. All of us were children at one time and eventually we grew up and made decisions and choices as to where we would live, what job we would have, who we would marry, and what religious teachings we will follow. Some follow in their fathers footsteps in all of these areas. They might live in the same town, work at the same job as their parent, marry someone like their Mom or Dad, and maybe even attend the same church. Whatever we decide to do will be our decision. It will not be up to our parents. When we make some mistakes, we will have no one to blame but ourselves.

Certain Jews in Jesus' day and even some people today put their hope in their family association with God. The Jews said to Jesus, *"We are Abraham's Offspring."* (John 8:33) Some do the same thing today whenever they say, "My dad was an elder in the church," or "my mother was a good woman." How your parents behaved, has no bearing on your present condition and relationship before God. They may have played a part in bringing you up but you must now stand alone on your own two feet.

A relationship with God is spiritual. It is a fellowship that is established through our individual self-denial and obedience in Jesus Christ. Parents can no more do these things for their children than they can hate, love, or feel joy in their place. Each one who comes to God becomes His "child." Just like each one becomes a branch of the true vine (John 15:1-8), a stone in God's building (I Cor. 3:10), a laborer in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16), a soldier in His army (Phil. 2:25; II Tim. 2:3-4), and a citizen in His kingdom (Phil. 3:20). These figures show the serving relationship between the individual who has freely given themselves to God in Christ.

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved," limits this relationship to those who have the ability to believe. Infants do not fit this category. They are in no need of forgiveness. *"The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself."* (Ezek. 18:20) We may inherit many things from our parents: money, fame, a good or bad name, etc., but religion cannot be inherited. God only has children, no grandchildren!

– Shane Williams