

Family in the New Testament

Characteristics of a father:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:8 – 12 Spiritual fathers (v 11) draw on the image of good earthly fathers
 - Dedicate life
 - Dear
 - Laboring night and day (not a burden)
 - Devout
 - Just
 - Blameless
 - Exhort
 - Comfort
 - Charge to walk worthy
- Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.
- Colossians 3:21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.
- Hebrews 12:5 – 11 Whom the Lord loves He chastens.
- 1 John 2:13 – 14 I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning.
- 1 Corinthians 4:14 – 17 Paul considered himself the father of those he taught.
- Romans 4:16 Abraham, father of us all
- God wants to be understood as this kind of Father.

Characteristics of a mother:

- Proverbs 31:1 The utterance which his mother taught him.
- 1 Thessalonians 2:7 We were gentle among you as a nursing mother cherishes her own children
- Isaiah 66:13 As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you.
- 2 Timothy 1:5 Paul attributes Timothy's faith to his mother and grandmother.

Characteristics of a child:

- 1 Timothy 5:1 – 2 Treat older Christians as parents
- Galatians 4:6, Romans 8:15 Abba, Father
- Ephesians 5:31 Leave father and mother and cling to wife
- 2 John 4, 13 Children reflect on the parents
- Ephesians 6:2 Honor father and mother
 - To honor is to be counted worthy, special, and desirable. Figuratively, honor is substituted for the value or price of something.
 - "Authority" is nowhere implied on the part of the one being honored.
- Colossians 3:20, Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents
 - This word that is translated "obey" carries no assignment of authority to the one "obeyed" but rather is better understood as a recommendation to listen to good advice (or avoid bad advice). The Old English word "hearken" is a better translation.
 - Two other Greek words also are translated "obey." They have different connotations.

- Literally, the word means “readiness to attend,” as Rhoda attended to the gate. Acts 12:13
 - In every case, individuals are called upon to make a choice concerning whom to heed.
 - Jesus did not overpower the wind and the sea (and demons), but with a word. Those forces responded. Matthew 8:27, Mark 4:41, Luke 8:25, Mark 1:27
 - Sarah chose to respond, as implied by the middle voice in 1 Peter 3:5.
 - We respond to God or Jesus or the faith because we choose it (from the heart).
 - Obedience is used as a figure of speech for faith (Romans 5:19, 6:16, 6:19, *et al*), so is not a reference to rules.
 - Obedience to the flesh is a choice. The flesh has no real authority. Romans 6:12
 - In what way and to what extent children choose to respond to parents depends on the demands of the parents and the objectives of the children. Parents will not be given the opportunity to advise Jesus on whom to accept. Paul advises children to give serious consideration to the advice of parents. Children must be prepared to accept the repercussions of their choices, either of declining good advice or of accepting faulty advice.
 - This word does not carry any overtone of authority of one person over another. Rather, one party pays heed to the advice of another.
- God chose:
 - The physical family as an illustration of the spiritual family.
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