

Extraordinary Minister's Children

“But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving”

(2 Corinthians 8:7, *NIV*).

Extra! Extra! Extraordinary! Read all about it! This lesson is not meant to isolate, but to celebrate, a special group of people in the body of Christ—our minister's children. They serve a special function. They go far above and beyond the ordinary, and are truly exceptional. Search the entire New Testament through and you will be hard pressed to find a passage that specifically mentions pastor's or minister's (let alone missionary's) children. Overall, the closest we get, is with the instructions Paul gave to his adopted sons in the gospel; Timothy and Titus. So, we will be depending on TNT and a couple others to teach us several ways to become extraordinary minister's children.

Excel

Everyone wants to excel; to succeed. No one wakes up in the morning and conscientiously decides, “I think I'll fail today. In fact, I have just decided I'm going to flop at life.” God wants us to excel. “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” (Jeremiah 29:11). God promises and provides hope for the future. We will reach our “expected end.” He intends for us to develop into people of quality; moving forward in the things that matter most to Him. What are those things? Scripture explains, “But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving” (2 Corinthians 8:7, *NIV*).

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be firm (steadfast), immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord [always being superior, excelling, doing more than enough in the service of the Lord], knowing and being continually aware that your labor in the Lord is not futile [it is never wasted or to no purpose]” (1 Corinthians 15:58, *AMP*).

Example

Kids are used often—too often—as examples in sermons. Close to a father's heart, and in his search for a practical, living, personal case-in-point, it is natural for him to look no further than his own home. This is, at times, to the embarrassment of the one being exposed. More than one pastor has used his child or spouse as an illustration and met displeasure when stepping away from the pulpit and into the parsonage.

Every pastor has an entire arsenal of family ammunition for sermon strengthening. This, rightfully so, is ammo that should be used with caution and with the license of those being fired upon for public viewing. Regardless of whether Preacher-Dad uses his kids in sermon illustrations, the reality is we are called upon to be examples (patterns for others to follow).

“Don’t let anyone think less of you because you are young. *Be an example to all believers* in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity” (1 Timothy 4:12, *NLT, emphasis mine*).

“Get the word out. Teach all these things. And don’t let anyone put you down because you’re young. Teach believers with your life: by word, by demeanor, by love, by faith, by integrity. Stay at your post reading Scripture, giving counsel, teaching. And that special gift of ministry you were given when the leaders of the church laid hands on you and prayed – keep that dusted off and in use”
(1 Timothy 4:11-14, *The Message*)

Extinction

It has been said that we are always one generation from extinction. This simply means that if we fail to live the truth and pass it on to others, it will result in Christianity dying out in—or with—them. Every godly parent, I hope, longs to look at grown children and say: “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (3 John 4). There is no greater sadness than to lose one’s own children. “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26). Whether we end up on the profit or loss side is up to us. Let’s make and be a profit!

Paul complimented Timothy, “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures” (2 Timothy 3:15). “I am calling up memories of your sincere and unqualified faith (the leaning of your entire personality on God in Christ in absolute trust and confidence in His power, wisdom, and goodness), [a faith] that first lived permanently in [the heart of] your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am [fully] persuaded, [dwells] in you also. That is why I would remind you to stir up (rekindle the embers of, fan the flame of, and keep burning) the [gracious] gift of God, [the inner fire] that is in you by means of the laying on of my hands [with those of the elders at your ordination]” (2 Timothy 1:5-6, *AMP*). It is faith that is living. It is rich! Fan into flame the gift that God has given you. Don’t relax. Keep it ablaze! “All those prayers are coming together now so you will do this well, fearless in your struggle, keeping a firm grip on your faith and on yourself” (2 Timothy 1:18, *MSG*).

There is a difference between being taught, knowing, and doing. And what was Timothy to do with the scriptures he was taught from birth? “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right” (2 Timothy 3:16, *NLT*). “But don’t let it faze you. Stick with what you learned and believed, sure of the integrity of your teachers—why, you took in the sacred Scriptures with your mother’s milk! There’s nothing like the written Word of God for showing you the way to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God’s way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us” (2 Timothy 3:14-17, *MSG*).

Extension

One thing is for sure. We are an extension of our parents. What we do or do not do is a direct reflection on our family. More than that, we are an extension of our parent's ministry with a role to play; a part to fulfill. Philip's prophesying princesses are suitable examples of that. He had four daughters: all actively involved in operating in their giftings and ministries.

"And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy" (Acts 21:8-9, *KJV*).

We can quote with dual significance, "Did you not see and know that it is necessary [as a duty] for Me to be in My Father's house and [occupied] about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49, *AMP*).

We exist because of the times, and our understanding of the need, beckons for us to be involved in God's kingdom: "And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do (1 Chronicles 12:32).

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams" (Acts 2:17, *NIV*). So, speak on. Encourage on. Preach on. Have a vision and pursue it with all your strength. "For those who dream, the road of life glistens with a million golden promises—To journey along that road, all that is needed is the strength to hold on to those dreams and the vision to see them through" (Caroline Gray).

Expectations

Face it. The minister, his wife, and their children attract the highest expectations from others. Some reflect on the minister and his family and say they live in "glass houses." This means that those on the outside (society and the congregation) are always looking at what is taking place inside the minister's family. An African Proverb says, "The higher a monkey climbs on the tree, the easier it is to see its backside." Ever notice how the media thrives on negative stories about the ministry falling into sin or disgrace? What they see, or fail to see, in the pastor, his wife, and their kids' lives they make it excusable in their own. Many times what they see in their own lives would be quickly judged and criticized if seen in the minister's family. Unfortunately, this creates a double standard. What is acceptable for members and their children is not expected or accepted when it comes to the minister's family. They are subject to a higher expectation; a higher standard (James 3:1). God expects the family to measure up to expectations, as well: "For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?" (1 Timothy 3:5, *NLT*).

The extraordinary minister's kid is "remarkable." That means remark-able; people are able to make good remarks. Rest assured, there is a big group of onlookers that are remark-able: able to make good remarks or bad. Let's cleave to the good, and abandon the bad.

Experience

Experience is profitable throughout life. Minister's kids gain skills in teamwork, leadership, handling people, cross-cultural communications, and surviving on a limited budget, to name a few. Add to that, the strength of a Christian family, spiritual heritage, trust in God and faith and minister's children have the edge. Some studies estimate that over eighty percent of success in the leadership field can be attributed to one's ability to get along with people.

Most ministers do not mind sacrificing and suffering. They accept it. However, they would like to avoid it or do away with it in the lives of their children. Tough times make us tough.

All pass through the "School of Hard Knocks." This is the school of difficult life experiences. It breaks, shapes, and makes us. Someone once said, "He who bears no cross deserves no crown." No cross; no crown. No battle; no victory. Our experiences help us to be profitable to others, and God's kingdom, throughout life. One man referred to our role as being a "wounded healer." Because we have felt the sting of wounds ourselves, we are in the best position to adequately minister to others who are wounded or hurting.

Warren and David Wiersebe in *Ten Power Principles for Christian Service* said, "The nature of Christian ministry is such that it presents us with daily opportunities that can become either tests to build us up or temptations to tear us down." Life's experiences can make us better or bitter.

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Romans 5:3-4). I'm sometimes cautious of praying for patience or to be more patient. Why? The Scripture makes it plain that tribulations, trials, tests, and suffering brings about patience. However, it also leads to experience and provides hope.

"Moreover [let us also be full of joy now!] let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance. And endurance (fortitude) develops maturity of character (approved faith and tried integrity). And character [of this sort] produces [the habit of] joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation" (Romans 5:3-4, AMP).

Tim Hansel in *Holy Sweat* tells of a revealing research done concerning 413 famous and gifted people. Two researchers spent years trying to discover the source of their greatness. The common thread that ran through most (392) of their lives was that they had to triumph over difficult obstacles in order to become who they were. Obstacles became opportunities.

The expedition to becoming an extraordinary minister's kid is best traveled when we provide an *example* or pattern for others to follow; live above reproach by meeting godly *expectations*; serve as an *extension* and compliment to our parent's ministry; exemplify the truth and pass it on to others to prevent *extinction*; *excel* at everything we do; and allow our *experiences* to make us better.

Study Questions

1. In 2Corinthians 8:7, list six (6) things that matter most to God (ways He wants us to excel).

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____

2. Explain why preacher-dads should be careful when using their children as sermon illustrations. _____

3. Write out one verse of Scripture that makes it clear we should be an example to everyone. _____

4. Give a brief explanation for this statement: "We are always one generation from extinction." _____

5. Explain the difference between being taught, knowing, and doing. _____

6. Explain how children are an extension of their parent's ministry. _____

7. Explain the following statement: "The minister and his family lives in a glass house." Support your answer with Scripture references that agree with the statement. _____

8. Name at least five (5) skills minister's kids experience throughout life that are helpful in their future.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

9. List four (4) strengths experienced by minister's kids that give them an edge over other children in life experience and hope.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

10. The expedition to becoming an extraordinary _____ kid is best traveled when we provide an _____ or pattern for others to follow; live above reproach by meeting godly _____; serve as an _____ and compliment to our parent's ministry; exemplify the truth and pass it on to others to prevent _____; _____ at everything we do; and allow our _____ to make us _____.