

PARENTS WHO ARE LIKE GOD

David Halbrook

God identifies Himself as “Father” because His care for us is similar to that of earthly parents for their children. Learning more about His care for us will help you better understand how to care for your children.

Teach what is good Our little ones have no knowledge of good or evil (Deut. 1:39). Parents who are like God, teach them to know the difference (Deut. 30:15; Heb. 5:14). Parents who teach their children “good behavior” without including God as the author of what is good fail their children. Children must learn how to know what is good. Your idea alone is not enough and without God, you have no answer.

Give what is good Jesus made this exact point (Matt. 7:11). What is good to give? Physical needs (1 Tim. 5:8), words of praise and rebuke (Eph. 4:29), punishment (Prov. 23:13), limited amount of “wants” (1 Tim. 6:9), proper affection (Ti. 2:4)—all that nourishes their body, mind, and spirit.

In the end, what will matter most is whether we each obeyed our Father, Creator. He is waiting for you to return to Him (Luke 15:20-24). Contact us if we can help, WWW.QVCOC.COM.

-- *Editor's Note:* God created the world and designed relationships in a way that will help thoughtful people to learn spiritual lessons, consistent with Scripture. Many such truths can be observed from the family relationship. A knowledge of truth of the physical family is consistent with many truths of the spiritual family. Use our *Arkansas Weekly* article to help someone think about what God expects of them.

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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CHURCHES LESS POPULAR THAN RESTAURANTS, PUBS, AND SPORTS BARS

Steve Wallace (*The Way of Truth & Life, May 6, 2012; church of Christ in St. Leon, IN*)

A couple years ago a writer cited a survey and stated, “Less than 18 percent of Americans say the church is the friendliest place in town...” Among the findings in the survey was the following. “Churches fall behind restaurants, pubs, and sports bars when it comes to favorite places to meet new friends.”¹ *In spite of all the appeals to the flesh made by many modern churches they are still less popular than places whose business it is to make such appeals.* By “appeals to the flesh” we mean food, entertainment, recreation, and the like. Restaurants, pubs, and sports bars blatantly advertise their wares. There is no bait and switch. What you see is what you get. Can churches learn anything from their comparative lack of popularity?

1. The market driven approach has a place in the world of commerce but *not* in the realm of reaching people for Christ. Seeking different ways to appeal to consumers by producing newer and better products or offering newer and better services is simply the way things operate in the business world.

It is folly for churches who claim a biblical basis for their actions to try this approach. Their God-given appeal is unique. Briefly put, the word of life, the new life with God that it brings, and the promise of eternal life in heaven are what true churches have to offer to the lost around them (Phil. 1:27; 2:16; 4:15,16; 1 Thes. 1:8). Unlike the aforementioned establishments, churches cannot change the appeal they make based on the response they get (2 Jno. 9-11).

¹ Survey: Church, Ministers Not the Friendliest in Town, By Lillian Kwon , Christian Post Reporter 2/4/10

2. Will more churches follow restaurants, pubs and sports bars in seeking to appeal to people by serving alcohol? The Roman Catholics have for years been appealing to people via a program called *Theology on Tap*. This is a program which schedules meetings at local pubs for people to come and hear discourses by Catholic priests or other chosen speakers while having the opportunity consume alcohol. Such gatherings provide what many *T.O.T.* web sites call a “friendly atmosphere.” Judged only on the basis of the woe that alcohol has brought to millions of lives we must ask, is this a “friendly” appeal to make (Prov. 23:29)?

Churches who base their appeals on such data as that contained in our introduction above may have reached a crossroads. (I must admit that I swallow hard when thinking what some might do with what I am about to write). Are they going to take the final step in their quest for numbers and start serving alcohol? After all, we are told this creates the “friendly atmosphere” that people want! This leads to our final point.

3. How do we measure friendliness? The above news states that a small percentage of Americans find church the friendliest place in town. Many people look at friendliness as accepting people as they are. With but few restrictions, such as “no shoes, no shirt, no service,” restaurants, pubs, and sports bars indiscriminately accept people who come to them.

By contrast, true Christians realize that the greatest friend man has ever had is Christ Jesus (Matt. 11:28-32; 20:28; Jno. 3:16; Heb. 2:17,18). Therefore, they are friendly in a way the world can never be. They point people to Jesus (Matt. 11:28-30). They teach against the sins of this world and call people to follow Jesus’ ways (Jas. 4:4; 1 Jno. 2:15; Mk. 16:15,16; Rom. 10:9,10; Acts 2:38). He is the only real hope for this world. *How do you measure friendliness?*

The numbers game has deceived many churches into making almost every conceivable appeal in order to attract people. Rather than spend time devising schemes based on human wisdom churches and Christians should seek to bring the lost to Jesus in the way He has ordained (Mk. 16:15; Rom. 1:16).

HOW TO AVOID A FACTITIOUS SPIRIT

Jerry Fite

What does factiousness mean? Does it mean “strife”? Or, could it mean “divisions”? Factiousness must have a different connotation than these qualities, for it is listed separate from them. Among the works of the flesh, Paul lists “. . .*strife*,

jealousies, wraths, faction, divisions and par-ties. . .” (Galatians 5:20). While contention or *strife* may accompany one who is factious, and result in *divisions*, the factious spirit must be differentiated.

The Greek word, ERITHIA comes from the word ERITHOS which denotes “a hireling”. Receiving pay for work accomplished is not wrong in itself. The attitude degenerates into a work of the flesh when the only reason one works is for the pay. Like all sin, selfishness lies at the root. Factiousness therefore de-notes an ambitious, self-seeking and self-willed spirit.

Since a factious spirit will keep one from his or her inheritance in heaven (Galatians 5:21), we should possess attributes which keep such a soul damning spirit from fostering in our heart. Here are some reminders:

Keep Christ the center of your life and the focus for your thinking. Like Paul, we must die to self and live for Christ (Galatians 2:20, Philippians 1:21). Ambition, the strong desire to achieve something, is centered on pressing toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14). The selfish ambition to receive glory from others is replaced with the desire to glorify God.

Humility will help repress the factious spirit. Humbling ourselves before the Lord and submitting to His truth is an action foreign to the factious spirit. In fact, the factious will “*not obey the truth*”. Their pride hinders submission to God’s way, but in reality they are submitting in obedience to “*unrighteousness*” (Romans 2:8).

Keeping jealousy out of our heart will go a long way in suppressing a factious spirit. The selfish desire to have the glory others have can create false motives, which can even creep in to one’s presentation of God’s truth. There were some in Philippi who preached the truth of Christ. Their motive was not to promote the cause of Christ, but “*to raise affliction*” for Paul “*in his bonds*” (Philippians 1:17). Out of envy people become factious (Philippians 1:15). Why be jealous? We stand before God with our own abilities, and will be rewarded by our own work (Matthew 25:14-30, I Corinthians 3:8). Why waste life’s energy on envy?

Eliminating the stubborn spirit will help one avoid the factious spirit. The factious are stubborn because you can admonish them with truth more than once, and they still will not comply (Titus 3:8). Void of humility, it is but a short step to obstinacy. Such a person will not bend or be molded by truth, for they know everything. One must constantly be open to God’s truth, humbly measure self by the truth and faithfully follow the truth wherever it leads. The virtue of conviction is but sinful stubbornness when one no longer listens to the truth. May we grow spiritually and avoid the factious spirit! (Glad Tidings March 11, 2012 <http://parkviewcoc.org>)