**Elkanah, A Model Father**

(by Gene Taylor)

The responsibility God gives to fathers is great. **Ephesians 6:4** tells them that they must bring up their children ***"in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."*** Sadly, many fathers, even those who claim to be Christians, fail to accept the responsibilities of fatherhood causing much grief in many families.

It behooves us, therefore, to teach men their God-given responsibilities in respect to their children. One of the best ways to do that is to study the examples given to us in the Bible of those men who were good fathers.

There are many men we could consider. Abraham, Zebedee, and Joseph, the "father" of Jesus, come to mind. In this article, though, we will focus on a character that is not widely known or closely studied. We will examine the example of Elkanah, the father of Samuel.

Elkanah is presented unto us in the first chapter of First Samuel. Though it does not seem that much information is given concerning him as a father, in reality, there is a great deal to be learned from him in this text (**1 Samuel 1:1–28**).

***He Set An Example Of Worship And Service***

He was concerned with worshiping God (**1 Samuel 1:3**). This speaks more of him than his wealth, physical appearance, fame, etc. Notice, he did not go to worship alone. His family accompanied him (**1 Samuel 1:21**). Children need to accompany parents to all services.

He trained his family to worship by supplying them with individual portions for sacrifice to God (**1 Samuel 1:4**). Fathers need to train their children to worship properly today.

***He Loved His Wife***

He loved Hannah, his wife, the mother of his children (**1 Samuel 1:5**). Husbands are to love their wives (**Ephesians 5:25**). Through the love a husband has for his wife, the love for their children is revealed. Someone has said, *"The best thing a father can do for his children is to be a good husband to their mother."*

***He Cooperated In Rearing Their Child***

Hannah prayed to God for a son and promised to devote him to service to Him if her prayer were answered (**1 Samuel 1:11**). Elkanah concurred with her decision and allowed his son Samuel to be given to Eli, the priest (**1 Samuel 1:3**).

***He Was Possessed By God***

The name Elkanah means "God has possessed." He was the man he was, the husband he was, and the father he was because he was God-possessed. He had given himself to God. God was in control of his life. Such is probably the key to success in fatherhood -- whether or not one’s life has been given in submission to the will of God.

A Reason to Run

(by Phil Robertson)

In Kenya it is not uncommon for children to walk many miles to school. However, most do not lollygag around: They run! Why? Well, a reporter at the Sydney Olympics may have inadvertently stumbled upon the answer as he questioned Kenyan marathoner Kip Lagat. He wanted to know how Kenya kept producing so many great distance runners. Did it have something to do with their training? Lagat replied, *“It’s the road signs, ‘Beware of lions!’”*

Imagine passing a sign that warns of hostile predators on your way to work or school. It would certainly give you a reason to keep your arms and legs inside the vehicle at all times. But, if you are on foot, it means RUN!

My mom used to warn me about strangers. Do you think a Kenyan mother tells her children as she hands them their lunch pail, *“Have fun at school today and watch out for the lions.”* If she loves them she does.

Frankly, this is sound Biblical advice. Peter warns all of us of a lion that roams every neighborhood in the world. ***“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”*** (**2 Peter 5:8**). We sometimes forget this great danger & fail to heed the warning signs in God’s Word. In **Genesis**, Satan took the form of a serpent when he tempted man. Today, he does not look quite that suspicious, yet his bite remains like that of lion ripping apart prey.

So what do you do when you find yourself in lion country? You run just like Kenyan children until you’re safely home. Along the way, just like great marathoners, we become great spiritual runners who will one day wear an everlasting crown! (**1 Corinthians 9:25**).