

Our parents and our image of God

A Letter:

The 2nd Commandment has meaning many of us are totally unaware of. God designed the family and intended that through observing the Image of God enacted in the lives of mother and father, the child forms his or her understanding and image of God in their innermost self. When parents put forth a false image of God, one that is selfish, unreasonable and arbitrary, or sometimes even heartless and cruel--the child is badly damaged in his spiritual life forever, unless he himself learns on his own the real character of God and can, by God's grace change his inner views.

This is why the 2nd commandment talks about: **"I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."**

The iniquity of the parents that is visited on the children is this putting forth of a false image of God to the children. Idol worship of course does the same thing, but the iniquity of the parents is more often happening right in our own homes- 'Christian' homes!

This is why there is such a problem to people who have had parents who put across a selfish and unreliable image to their children.

The secret of having obedience in a child is that the **child has to be able to feel that the parent has the child's best good at heart and really cares and unselfishly loves him.** When a parent demonstrates selfish behavior, unreasonable behavior or the child sees he is so changeable from one day to the next, he can't know what to expect--**the pattern is formed in the child's mind that the parent is only interested in his own self and the child can't trust him to make choices for his best good**--only for the parent's convenience!! Then obedience is not desirable for the child--he feels he has to fight for his rights, as it were, to survive. As soon as he can he does his own thing. Rebelliousness becomes part of his very character and grows up with him.

Because the child forms his image of God from what his parents are--this carries through into adulthood and causes the person to feel rebellious against God, because **he finds it very hard to realize that God, unlike his parents, is totally unselfish and NEVER will order anything that is not for the BEST GOOD of the person.** He never orders anything just to show His 'authority'. He always guides in the way we ourselves would choose if we knew the outcome which He knows. It takes a lot of personal interaction with God and effort on the part of the person raised by such parents to get rid of the idea that God is just arbitrary and wants to use us for His own ends or punish us to force His will upon us to hurt us or stop us from being happy. This is the iniquity that carries through to the children.

I heard a true story that happened to a man captured and held for ransom with a large group of people in South America. The captors had announced that in a day or so they were going to release one group and let them go home, while the other group stayed captive. This man was in the group they said they were going to release.

He was a Christian and God impressed him strongly, "See that person over there in the other group? You ask to change places with him, he is sick, let him go with your group." Well this guy refused and accused God saying "**You just want to keep me here forever! I won't do it. I am going home!**" This happened 4 times that day, God impressed him really clear, and each time the man rebelled.

Then when the day came the captors were going to release his group, they just laughed and said--"we changed our mind--the other group is going home--you guys are staying here!"

The man was devastated! He realized that God was not trying to do something bad to him but had his own best good in what He asked. That man was a long time and went through much suffering before he finally got free.

This has helped me a lot to understand my struggles of the past--Why I was up and down like a toilet seat--I was never converted as that false pattern was in me- it **was only as I began to actually learn about God's character, and I began to change my picture of Him**--then I was able to be converted for the first time--and I have never, by His grace, backslid since that knowledge became a part of me. At first it was just rudimentary, but as it grows more and more, my Christian walk becomes closer and closer to Him.

Dearly beloved; If you has been putting forth a false image of God to your family, or children--the only answer is to confess and pray for forgiveness and power to live the Christ-life before all. YES--and confess to your children too! whether they are toddlers of adults with children of their own--repent and confess humbly asking for forgiveness and to work together to live the right image of Jesus. That is the only way the MERCY that is promised can start breaking the chains of that iniquity that carries on down the generations-- the only way to heal the rified false images create in the soul!

God Bless and guide you as you grow to know Him for real.