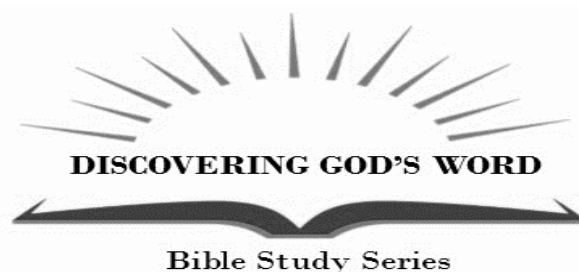


God's Blueprint For The Home

Lesson 4: God's Blueprint For The Husband And Father



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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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God's Blueprint For The Husband And Father

God has given each member of the home a specific role to fulfill. As the Architect of the home, He is the one who knows how the home will be the most successful. So, if we are interested in building according to God's blueprint, we must observe these roles and fulfill them to the very best of our abilities.

Although every member of the family is equal in importance and value, they do not all have equal roles. But, rather than despising the roles God has assigned, these roles ought to be embraced. Each member of the home ought to learn how he/she can fulfill these roles in such a way that will result in God-approved homes.

The husband and father is one important piece in the home. And, God has given him the distinction of being the head of the home. Certainly, this involves great responsibility, as much of his family's success will depend on how he fulfills his role. It is, indeed, very sad and devastating to a family whenever husbands and fathers do not listen to God concerning their role in the home.

As we consider God's blueprint for the home, we must consider His blueprint for the role of the husband and father. Although Satan is working to diminish this role and reorganize the home, we must recognize that God's plan is always the best one. So, we must consider the man as the head of the home. And, in doing so, this means that we must consider the husband as head of his wife and as head of his children.

The Man Is The Head Of The Home

Many homes have quickly gone astray from God's blueprint by simply never understanding God's blueprint regarding the roles in the home. You see, God has not just given us the roles and left it up to us to assign who gets to fill them. Instead, He has given us both the roles *and* assigned who must fill them. So, even though the man's headship of the home is often challenged, it must be embraced and understood according to God's pattern. For, there have also been many men who have abused their role in the home. Therefore, let's consider the role of headship God has given to men in the home.

God has given man this position

As the ultimate Head of the home, God also assigned roles to each member of the home. So, as we consider these roles, we must remember that their origin is the eternal and all-wise God who never changes! Therefore, God always knows what is best for those people He has created – including in the home.

Now, as we consider these roles, let's recognize that these roles *do not* indicate that anyone is unequal in value. All people in every home have the same value physically and spiritually! They just *do not* have the same roles and standing in the home. But, please remember that God is the only one who has the authority to assign roles in the home – because He is the one who has created it!

Regarding the husband, God has assigned him to be the head of the home. Listen to Ephesians 5:23: "For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body." Please consider two things from this verse. First, the headship of the husband in the home is compared to the headship of Christ over the church (see Colossians 1:18). So, just as there can be no doubt that Christ is Head of His church, there can be no doubt that God has assigned the husband to be the head of the home. Second, the headship of the husband over the home is *not* a matter of cultural preference. Just as Christ continues to be the Head of the church, husbands continue to be the only proper and God-assigned heads of their homes. And, this headship lasts for exactly as long as he has a home to be head over. Shifting opinions in culture do not change God's arrangement in the home!

Also consider 1 Corinthians 11:3. “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” Now, there are two important lessons to see from this verse. First, this is another passage that proves God has assigned husbands as having the role of being head over their wives. There is a God-given structure that is identified in this verse, and this structure never changes. Second, this passage provides evidence that the husband’s headship does *not* make him more valuable than his wife. For instance, God (the Father) is Head over Jesus. But, this does not make Jesus any less God than the Father is. The same thing is true regarding men and women.

Now, what does the man’s headship of the home *mean*? Ephesians 5:24 makes it abundantly clear that a wife has the responsibility to submit to her husband “in everything.” And, Ephesians 6:1 commands children to “obey” their parents. The only area in which wives and children are permitted not to submit and obey the head of the home is whenever following his lead goes against the will of God. We must always obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29)!

Although this provides just a very brief overview of the God-given structure of the home, demonstrating that the husband is assigned by God to be the head of the home, I do want to spend a moment considering *why* this is the case. Now, please recognize that God does *not* have to explain His reasoning. But, I do believe that He helps us to understand His reasoning in 1 Timothy 2:11-14. “Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.”

Now, I recognize that this passage is not directly talking about the home. But, I believe the two reasons given are fitting to explain why God has assigned the husband as head of the home. First, God created the man before the woman. As Genesis 2 teaches, the woman was created to be a helper suitable for the man. Second, the woman was the first to commit sin. Only after Eve committed sin do we read of God telling her, “Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you” (Genesis 3:16). These two reasons do not change with the culture!

Now, before we consider the man’s role in greater detail, I want to stress that this role belongs to the man in the home. It is his responsibility to fulfill this role to the best of his ability. He cannot delegate

his headship to any other. And, he is the head of the home regardless of how his wife or children feel about that role. Regardless of how any other member of the home treats him or fulfills their roles, he has the responsibility to lead his family.

This is a position of leadership

To be the “head” of the home is to be the *leader* of the home. What God wants is real men who will step up in the home and lead as Christ leads His church. You see, there is much that rises or falls based on leadership (i.e. nations, businesses, churches). The home is no different. The leadership that a man provides in the home is crucial in determining whether the home and every member of the home will be pleasing to God or not.

So, God does not just want those who are part of the male sex to call themselves the head of the home. Instead, he wants real men who will rise to His calling to lead the home in the ways He has designed. Consider Jeremiah 5:1. Jeremiah was told, “Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; See now and know; And seek in her open places If you can find a man, If there is anyone who executes judgment, Who seeks the truth, And I will pardon her.”

Now, I do not think that Jeremiah would have had difficulty finding individuals who were male in Jerusalem. But, he would have difficulty finding real men who measured up to God’s standard of executing judgment and seeking truth! The same thing is true in the home today. Unfortunately, there are many men who have accepted the title or distinction as being the head of the home without actually leading the home. Or, there have been many men who have chosen to lead their homes “with an iron fist” as a dictator. However, we should learn what God’s model for leadership involves.

As I have already mentioned, the model for men in the home is Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 5:22-33, the relationship between the husband and wife is compared to the relationship between Christ and His church. So, while the wife should learn from the church, the husband is expected to learn from Christ. Consider, then, a few essential points about Christ’s leadership.

His leadership model is that of a loving Shepherd. In John 10:1-30, Jesus claimed to be “the good shepherd” who “gives His life for the sheep” (verse 11). He is not like a hireling who does not own the sheep and flees whenever there is trouble so that the sheep are harmed and scattered. Instead, He

intimately knows His sheep and He is known by His sheep. And, because His sheep see His loving care, they trust Him and are willing to follow His leadership.

This is the leadership model that husbands and fathers must emulate in the home. They must have such a sacrificial love for every member of the family that they would lay down their lives for each one. And, their families will develop respect and trust for them whenever they see the sacrificial love that is shown. The members of the family should never have any question that the decisions that are made by the head are *always* in their best interest. Therefore, they should have the utmost confidence that the direction he is leading them is safe and profitable. And, the husband and father who follows Christ's example of loving the church enough to sacrifice Himself for her will be focused on his family's best interests more than his own desires!

Next, Christ's leadership provides the perfect example. Christ's leadership was not a "do as I say, not as I do" model. Instead, Jesus condemned such hypocrisy whenever He saw it. For instance, Jesus condemned the hypocrisy of some religious leaders in Matthew 23 when He said, "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (verses 3-4). In contrast, Jesus lived on this earth and provided the perfect example of how to live to please God, being tempted in all the same ways we are tempted in (see Hebrews 4:15). Therefore, He has shown us the way and we only need to "follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

Husbands and fathers must lead their homes in this same way. Rather than just commanding, they must lead by example. They should be like an illuminated city on a hill and a candle set on a candlestick for their family to see and follow through this dark world (Matthew 5:13-16). They should be walking in Christ's footsteps and leading their families to do the same. Unfortunately, there are many husbands and fathers who do not provide this kind of leadership in the home. Instead, their wives and children recognize them as being hypocrites, unwilling to do the very things that are expected of them.

Finally, Christ's leadership centered around service. Christ is not a dictator who has only ever expected people to serve Him. While Christ certainly is to be served today, I want to consider that Christ came to this earth to be a servant! In contrast with how many

rulers of the Gentiles would lord it over others by their great authority, Jesus said, "And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:27-28). One example of Jesus' service on earth was when He (the Son of God) performed the lowly service of washing the feet of His followers (John 13:1-17). And, the ultimate demonstration of His sacrificial service is seen in that He left Heaven (though He was God) and came down to earth to be obedient to His Father even to the point of death on the cross (Philippians 2:5-11).

Husbands and fathers must imitate Christ's example of sacrificial service in the home. The God-appointed head of the home is not there to be served! Instead, he is there to serve his family! He is there to look out for their best interests and sacrifice of himself (i.e. his time) in order to make sure that their needs are met, including their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. They should have the same heart to be servants like Jesus, who even gave His life for His bride, the church. In fact, just prior to discussing the roles of husbands, wives, and children in Ephesians 5-6, Paul instructed Christians to be "submitting to one another in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:21). So, even as the God-appointed head of the home, the husband must always seek to serve and look out for what is in the best interest of the other members of his family (compare with Philippians 2:3-4).

Involves physical leadership

Now, I want us to recognize that the head of the home should be concerned about leadership in two areas. We begin by considering the leadership he should provide in physical areas. There are many physical aspects of a home. And, someone must have the authority to lead in these areas.

The home involves the physical necessities of life. The home involves secular education. The home involves the management of money. The home involves recreation. The home involves physical care. The home involves training children to be good citizens, hard workers, etc. The home involves a place to live and managing that place.

Although the husband does not have to be an "expert" in all of these areas or make all of the decisions in these areas, he is the leader. Although he may get advice from others (primarily including his wife), he must always act according to Biblical wisdom and in his family's best interest in all these areas. Ultimately, the direction he chooses to lead his family

regarding these physical things is the direction his family *must* go (provided he does not lead them in a direction that is sinful).

Involves spiritual leadership

The physical elements of the home are the *least* important of the leadership that the husband and father must provide. For, husbands and fathers must recognize that the souls of their wives and children are the greatest responsibility of all! Although every member of the family possesses free will, husbands and fathers should do everything they can to lead the members of their families in the ways of the Lord that will result in an everlasting home in Heaven.

In fact, whenever God teaches us about those who are to be the shepherds and overseers of a local church to look out for the spiritual wellbeing of the church, He says that these men must first have demonstrated their ability to lead their families in His ways (see 1 Timothy 3:1-7). Certainly, this must involve living a godly life in Christ Jesus himself that provides an example worth imitating for all his family. This also involves instructing his family in the ways of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).

So, the husband and father should be focused on the spiritual needs of the family. Sadly, there are many families in which the husband and father is leading the family in all the physical areas, but he is absent regarding their spiritual lives. So, for instance, his children may have all their physical needs met and have many of the niceties of life, but may not be taken to worship God. Or, his children may have been given an excellent secular education to prepare them for their future employment, but may not have received a Bible education in the home to prepare them for eternity. This is a failure of the husband and father's leadership at the greatest level, with eternal ramifications for both himself and the members of his family!

The importance of time

These are some great responsibilities of leadership that have been given to the husband and father! And, though the consequences of failing in these areas are great, the blessings are also great. Therefore, he should be committed to giving of his time in order that these responsibilities are fulfilled to the best of his ability.

In fact, there is no substitute for the husband and father spending time with his family. So, as the apostle Paul instructed Christians to redeem "the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16), there is no

greater application of this than in the home. It will certainly take a great commitment of time to lead in the physical and spiritual ways we have been discussing. And, remember that, as a shepherd of the home modeled after Jesus Christ, he should know every member of his home and be known by every member of the home. Therefore, he should make the best use of his time regarding his family.

Perhaps one of the greatest reasons homes fail is because the head of the home does not spend enough time with his family. Perhaps he has fallen for the "quality" time is more important than "quantity" reasoning offered by the world. However, there is no substitute for spending sufficient *quantities* of time with the family. If husbands and fathers do not do this, there will be a lack of familiarity between him and his "sheep." Then, his leadership will be missing the kind of trust that is so crucial to any home.

So, husbands and fathers need to seriously evaluate how committed they are to spending time with their families. Not just *quality* time, but also time in sufficient *quantity*! It is certainly sad and devastating to a home whenever there is absenteeism on the part of the husband and father (whether caused by being out of town frequently, unnecessary overtime, the pursuit of personal hobbies and recreation, or just neglect)! It has been said that "love" is spelled "T-I-M-E." And, there is certainly a lot of truth in that statement.

The Husband As Head Of His Wife

Up to this point, we have been focused on some general points concerning the husband and father as the head of the home, trying to understand what that leadership should look like. Now, we need to consider some additional specific responsibilities God has given him as head of his wife.

Love her

We considered love in great detail in lesson 2 of this study. But, it should be re-emphasized in this lesson also. For, in comparing the relationship between the husband and wife to Christ and the church, love is a crucial element. Listen to Ephesians 5:25-33.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of

water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

The bar for how the husband ought to love his wife has been set very high. Colossians 3:19 adds, "Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them." The husband's love must be a completely sacrificial kind of love, even willing to sacrifice his own life for her. Thus, he is always looking out for his wife's best interests, whether those are her physical, emotional, or spiritual interests. His love for her is to be as great as his love for himself. Just as he does not desire any harm to befall his own body, he must make sure that she has everything that is beneficial for her.

Notice, specifically, that part of this responsibility involves nurturing and cherishing his wife. After all, the text says this is exactly what he does for his own body. Just as he treats his own body in a way that provides it with the best opportunity to grow and mature, he provides the right kind of care for his wife to grow and mature in the best way possible. And, just as he shows affection for himself in caring for all of his own needs, he makes sure that all of her needs are being met. Again, with this, I mean physical, emotional, and spiritual. This means that husbands must love their wives enough to invest themselves entirely in her complete wellbeing.

Work to provide for her

Although this point could be included in the last, I want to separate it for emphasis. Husbands must work to provide for the physical needs of his wife. For instance, 1 Timothy 5:8 says, "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

Now, let me be clear that I am *not* talking about those who want to work and are not able to do so

(because of disability, inability to find work, etc.). But, those husbands who are unwilling to work so as to make sure that all his family's physical needs are met are not right with God! In fact, God even says that if a man is not willing to work, he should not eat either and should be withdrawn from as walking disorderly and not according to the commandments of God (see 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15).

What kind of man is it who does not love his wife enough to work to provide for her physical needs? Is he really loving his wife like Christ loved the church? Remember that Jesus' bride was spiritually bankrupt and destitute because of sin. And, His love caused Him to sacrifice Himself to leave Heaven, come to earth, suffer, and die so that she could be rich through His poverty (2 Corinthians 8:9). Surely, then, the husband should be committed to doing whatever he can to provide for the physical needs of his wife!

Dwell with understanding

Newsflash: Men and women are different, in many ways! So, husbands cannot deal with their wives in the same way that they would deal with another man. But, rather than becoming frustrated and angry toward his wife regarding these areas of differences, he is to live with her in an understanding kind of way. 1 Peter 3:7 says, "Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."

Husbands must recognize that their wives have different physical and emotional needs than he may have. And, rather than expecting her to become like him, he must seek to understand her needs and do his best to fulfill them. In addition, she has spiritual needs he must seek to understand.

Now, I am sure that list of needs wives have from their husbands is too lengthy to list here. And, some of these may differ from wife to wife (as each one is unique). But, I have some good news for husbands. You don't have to understand *women!* You only must understand *your wife!* Listening is going to prove to be essential to doing this. Although I cannot explain all the needs of your wife to you and marriage "experts" cannot explain all the needs of your wife to you, your wife can. You just need to devote the time to really listen to her. As James 1:19 teaches, you should be "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

Show her honor

Although husbands may often emphasize that their wives must show them respect (as Ephesians 5:33 teaches), God demands that husbands show honor to their wives. Once again, 1 Peter 3:7 says, “Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”

Husbands must demonstrate great loving care and treat their wives with the utmost respect. I am reminded of the Scriptures that teach about the great blessings wives are to their husbands. For instance, Proverbs 18:22 says, “He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the Lord.” And, concerning the virtuous wife in Proverbs 31, we are told, “Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies” (verse 10). Then, the text says that “Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her” (verse 28).

I believe the picture in 1 Peter 3:7 is that of a priceless piece of pottery. Now, you would not treat this vessel carelessly. Instead, you would make great effort to care for it and make sure that it is not broken. So, husbands should recognize that women have been designed differently than men and should not use their wives in ways that will cause her to break (physically, emotionally, or spiritually).

Finally, we should notice the consequences of failing in this regard. If husbands do not treat their wives in the proper way, they will have their prayers hindered. So, husbands must treat their wives in a way that honors them as an heir of “the grace of life,” both physically and spiritually (if they are Christians).

The Father As Head Of His Children

Having established some specific responsibilities husbands have toward their wives, we should consider some specific responsibilities fathers have toward their children. For, he cannot lead his home in a way that pleases God without fulfilling these responsibilities. For now, let’s consider an overview of some responsibilities, as we will focus on raising children in more detail in another lesson.

Provide for their needs

The responsibility husbands have to provide for the physical needs of their wives extend to fathers providing for their children. This *should* go without saying. Unfortunately, it does not. For, there are many fathers who do not work to provide for their own. Instead, they are willing to allow others to support them (i.e. their wives, their children, the government, etc.). Again, I am speaking about men who are able to work. And, there are men who relinquish their role of providing for their families to their wives and play “Mr. Mom” while their wives work.

Now, although these things may be acceptable in some cultures in this world, it should not be acceptable to those who are Christians! God’s blueprint teaches us that husbands and fathers must work to provide for the needs of their family members (1 Timothy 5:8) and that wives and mothers must be keepers/workers at home (Titus 2:4-5).

God was not being chauvinistic or old-fashioned whenever He said this. Rather, He simply knew what was best for all the members of the home! In fact, families can often be seen breaking down physically, emotionally, and/or spiritually whenever these roles are changed. So, the husband must work to provide for all of his family so that he makes it possible for his wife to fulfill her role as keeper and worker at home. In doing so, please remember that a family’s standard of living should not be allowed to override God’s blueprint! God has said, “Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content” (1 Timothy 6:6-8).

Provide instruction

Children must be trained. And, while mothers have a great part in this work, fathers still must take the lead in this training. Proverbs 22:6 says, “Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.” Now, fathers must recognize that “the way he should go” involves both physical and spiritual components. And, he should work to train his children in both.

Certainly, the primary area a father should desire to train his children is pertaining to the ways of the Lord. For instance, this responsibility is given specifically to fathers in Ephesians 6:4. “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the

Lord.” Speaking of Abraham, the Lord said, “For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him” (Genesis 18:19).

Fathers should be like Manoah (Samson’s father). Whenever it was revealed to him that he would have a son, Manoah “prayed to the Lord, and said, ‘O my Lord, please let the Man of God [the Angel of the Lord] whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born” (Judges 13:8). Whenever the Angel of Lord appeared to Manoah, Manoah said, “Now let Your words come to pass! What will be the boy’s rule of life, and his work?” (Judges 13:12). The point is simply this: Fathers should be considering the way in which their children ought to go (especially on a spiritual level). And, they should be committed to providing the necessary instruction to help them get to that place!

Provide loving discipline

God’s blueprint for raising children involves parents who provide discipline whenever it is appropriate. And, as the head of the home, fathers will lead the way in this regard. In fact, it is a necessary part of training children. Although some parents may claim that they love their children too much to discipline them, godly parents ought to love their children too much *not* to discipline them!

Proverbs 13:24 says, “He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.” Proverbs 23:13-14 says, “Do not withhold correction from a child, For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, And deliver his soul from hell.” In discussing the chastening God shows to His children, the Hebrew writer asks, “for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?” (Hebrews 12:7).

Fathers must carry out this unpleasant task as an essential part of training their children. But, it is to be carried out in love, not in hostility or anger! Remember that the punishment is for the *good* of the child, not for the good of your own emotions and fits of anger! So, fathers must execute their training (which includes discipline) in a way that does not provoke their children to wrath (Ephesians 6:4). Colossians 3:21 says, “Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.”

Conclusion

Husbands and fathers have been given a role of great responsibility in the home. In many ways, the success of the home depends upon whether they lead according to God’s blueprint. At a minimum, a failure to lead the family in this way will place an unnecessary burden on the backs of every member of the home. But, whenever men fulfill this role according to God’s pattern, it is a wonderful thing for everyone involved! So, God is searching for men to step up and be real men who will provide the kind of loving leadership for their homes as Jesus Christ provides for His church!

Study Questions

How is Satan trying to destroy the role of the husband and father in the home?

1. The Man Is The Head Of The Home

Who has given the man this role? Provide evidence for your answer.

What kind of leadership must the husband and father provide for the home?

How does this leadership involve physical leadership?

How does this leadership involve spiritual leadership?

How is time so important to this leadership?

Explain the father's responsibility to provide loving discipline for his children.

2. The Husband As Head Of His Wife

Explain the husband's responsibility to love his wife.

Explain the husband's responsibility to work to provide for his wife.

Explain the husband's responsibility dwell with his wife in an understanding way.

Explain the husband's responsibility to show his wife honor.

3. The Father As Head Of His Children

Explain the father's responsibility to provide for his children's needs.

Explain the father's responsibility to provide instruction for his children.