

## For Example: Parent | Reuben Kramer

Ephesians 5:1-2 | July 31, 2022

### Ephesians 5:1-2 (NIV)

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

*What does it look like to play the role of a parent, "just as" Jesus?*

#### 1. SACRIFICIAL LOVE (5.2)

*"...just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."*

What does sacrificial love look like as a parent? There are three things that I'd like to focus on:

First, **TIME**. The moment your child is born, you are hit with the reality that you are no longer a priority in your family. It takes a lot of time to be a good, intentional parent. All the time that you had to do the things that you wanted to do, has now been transferred to being used to raise your child.

Whether is the amount of sleep you get, or the activities that you are driving your kids around to, your time needs to be sacrificed. Jesus is always present in our lives. He gives us ALL of his time and is always there for us, no matter what. For us to be parents, **JUST AS JESUS**, we need to be willing to make the time to be **PRESENT** in our children's. Our presence is powerful!

Second, **WANTS**. As parents, we're called to give up our own selfish wants in place of what is best for our children. What used to be a priority for ourselves, whether it's a **HOBBY**, **SPORTS CAR**, **RELAXING VACATIONS**, **ETC**, is no longer allowed to be on the top of the list. Even our jobs, which can seem like a noble thing to prioritize, can become more important than our children. In order to give the best for our children, we need to put their wants and needs ahead of our own wants.

When Jesus was in Gethsemane, Matthew shares that he was *sorrowful and troubled*. Knowing that he was close to giving up his life for us, Jesus experienced the struggle that comes with giving up what is best for ourselves for the best of others. He obviously was not looking forward to his death, but he knew it was what he had to do to save us from death! When we do this for our children, it makes a huge difference in their lives.

Let's be parents that don't put our own wants ahead of our children!

Third, **IMPORTANCE**. Jesus came to earth for us. To die for us and to serve us. He was never in it for himself. He went against all cultural expectations of a leader and savior. His goal was to glorify God, not himself.

Sometimes as parents, we fall into the trap of using our children to glorify ourselves. We can push them too hard in a sport or activity – hoping that their

success will elevate us. We may even overwork ourselves as parents so that others around us will think we are great. We live in a generation where parents use their children to get more followers on social media.

Just as Jesus did not sacrificially love us for his own glory, neither should we with our own children. Our heart should be to serve our kids for their benefit, not our own! Let's practice HUMILITY as parents.

*We still need to take care of ourselves!*

## 2. TRAIN & INSTRUCT

*"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."* **Ephesians 6:4**

It's great for us to love our children, but there needs to be more than that. In this section of scripture, Paul does not say a lot to parents, but what he does say is very important.

NOTE: you see that Paul only address fathers. Culturally, since he is the head of the family, the husband acts representatively for his wife (as mother) as well as on his own behalf. Therefore, this is address to both father and mother.

*It is important for us to remember that the way we parent is IN RESPONSE to what Jesus has done for us. It needs to begin with allowing Jesus to do his work in our lives so we can be our best as parents.*

Paul then goes on to introduce 2 ASPECTS of Christian education that need to take place in our homes: TRAINING & INSTRUCTION.

As Christian parents, we need to ***train*** our children to know and live by the Word of God. The word "train" is used because it's not just a relaxed, "be familiar" kind of thing. It's a teaching our kids to know and understand who Jesus is and what he teaches. LEAD BY EXAMPLE.

We are also called to ***instruct*** our children about how they are to act and treat those around us. The Greek word that Paul used is defined as "correction by word of mouth". I know this is something that we do all the time as parents, but these corrections need to be based on the foundation of Biblical teaching.

Now more than ever, our children are being bombarded with messages, ideas and pressures from our world that do not line up with the Gospel. We need to raise children on the truth of the Gospel and to live *just as Jesus lived*.

*Our homes need to be the primary source of Christian ed.*

## 3. TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

*"Instead, be filled with the Spirit."* **Ephesians 5:18b**

- a. We're not meant to do this alone! Jesus gave us his Spirit and His church.
  - i. What influence are we under?
  - ii. Parenting is not meant to be done on an island. We need to embrace the community around us to help in raising up our children.
  - iii. Church community is vital to raising our kids up to not only know Jesus, but to actually have an impact on our world for the kingdom of God.
  - iv. Our children need "spiritual parents" in addition to their biological parents. This could look like a close family friend, a youth leader, kid's church teacher, coach or mentor.

- b. There are also many children without parents in their lives or solid examples to look up to.
  - i. We can all play the role of a spiritual parent in the lives of the young people around us.

## QUESTIONS

- How have you been following Christ's example as a parent? Are there any areas that you need to grow in?
- What does it look like to train and instruct your children at home? What can you start doing today?
- How can we play the role of a spiritual parent, mentor, leader for the children around us?
- Are there names of young people that come to mind?