

The Caring Father

By Pastor Ivan Leung

Children are bestowed to us by God as precious gifts. We are but humble stewards, entrusted with the responsibility of raising our children in God's likeness, according to His will and perfect plan.

This year, Father's Day falls on June 20th. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage every father in our midst. A father plays an important role in the growth of his children. A scholar specializing in a father's role pointed out that the success of a father lies in his steadfast commitment to understand his children, communicate with them and to provide for their material and spiritual needs. He should hold consistent principles about parenting and he should also love the mother of the children.

In Luke 15:11-33, Jesus told the parable of the prodigal son; He emphasized the crucial role of a father. This caring father in the parable is the role model for all fathers of today.

First, this caring father was willing to let go by looking up to the Lord.

Luke 15:12 tells us that the younger son asked for his father's property when the father was still alive. It was totally acceptable for the father to refuse. However, this caring father was willing to divide up his properties to grant the younger son his share. When this son had sold the property, left home and squandered all the money, the father did not actively intervene. Instead, he was able to let go by looking up to God,

in the hope of exposing the son to the opportunity of taking control of his own future and facing the various challenges of life.

Learning to let go is an important lesson for parents. Letting go means allowing our children to embrace freedom to learn to be independent adults. Parents who can let go empower their children in building up their confidence and independent thinking. On the contrary, parents who cannot let go impede on the healthy development of their children, depriving them of the opportunity to learn to be independent.

The Scripture reminds us that parents need to learn to let go, because it is the will of God for building a healthy marriage. Genesis 2:24 says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh". When two people decide to get married, the first step to take is to leave their fathers and mothers. The Bible does not teach us to abandon our parents. Instead, it reminds us that when we want to form a family, we should become independent of our parents in order to handle our own business. At the same time this concept of leaving the father and mother reminds parents to



let go, or else their children would find it hard to establish their new families.

Letting go is a process that involves the gradual transfer of freedom and responsibilities from the hands of the parents to the children. When a parent begins to give a free hand, it does not mean negligence. It actually signifies returning the children to the Lord. When we loosen our grip, it does not mean we will neglect our responsibilities. It in fact means letting go of the excessive worries that tend to be controlling. The father of the parable is willing to let go by looking up to the Lord, so that the son will have the opportunity to mature when faced with trials and challenges.

Second, this caring father never lost sight of his perpetual concern even after his son had left. He appeared to be constantly waiting for the son's return, as recorded in Luke 15:20,

"...but while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him". This behavior was highly reflective of the unfailing tender loving care of the father for his lost son.

To love and care for our children, we must learn to let go more and more over time. In raising children, we need to help them grow "roots" and "wings". If the roots are deeply planted, they will be able to withstand the storms of life. Therefore, we should encourage our children to plant their roots firmly in God and His own Words so that they are fortified against the challenges of the world.

"...like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions." (Deuteronomy 32:11)

In this passage, Moses explains how an eagle teaches its young to fly. Because of love, the eagle stirs its nest, forcing its young to leave the nest by encouraging them to learn to fly. A young eagle being sheltered in the nest would never learn to fly. What use would it be for an eagle unable to fly? Therefore, when the eagle starts to stir the nest, it is part of the process of teaching its young to grow and soar up high.

Today, our children also need a pair of wings so that they can soar towards the Lord. It all starts with the parents' willingness to let go by "stirring the nest". This is the practical act of any caring parent, inspired by the father of the prodigal son.

Third, this caring father showed unconditional acceptance (Luke 15:22-24). He never harbored any grudges against the son's unreasonable behaviors. Instead, he arranged

for the best robe, a ring, sandals and a feast to welcome the son home. There are metaphoric meanings to each item: the robe and the ring represent the restoration of former status; the sandals and a fattened calf represent the restoration of former jobs and responsibilities. This signifies the ultimate total acceptance of the lost son.

In the growing process of our children, they will inevitably experience numerous trials and will make mistakes! As we forgive and accept them unconditionally, our Heavenly Father will also forgive and accept us in the same manner. Jesus shared this parable with the purpose of enlightening us about the nature of our Heavenly Father's love. Whenever we repent, He will be touched and is delighted to forgive us, just like the father of the lost son.

Dear friends, do you want to return to our Father's side? Our Heavenly Father loves you and welcomes your return! His heart is overjoyed when he sees your return. I hope that on this Father's Day, you will be willing to return to your Father's side and pray. "Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for waiting for me. I want to return to your side; please accept and forgive me; in Jesus' name, Amen." I strongly believe when you make such a prayer, our loving Father will rejoice, forgive and accept you unconditionally.

Fourth, the kind father was willing to teach his son patience. (Luke 15:31-32). From the passage, we notice that when the older son returned home after work, he witnessed the family celebrating his brother's return. He became displeased. He did not only hold a grudge against his brother's folly, he was also unwilling to forgive. He was jealous because his father seemed to favour the younger brother.

When faced with the older brother's anger and complaints, the father patiently attended to his frustrations and rationalized with him:

1. You have always been with me (the father), but your brother had left home and wandered.
2. All my possessions belong to you, so you are indeed richer. Although your brother had his share of the inheritance, he had squandered it away entirely.
3. This brother of yours was dead but is alive again; he was lost and is found. We must celebrate and be glad.

This caring father knew how to listen and respond properly. He listened with empathy, and then responded "point by point". For example, when he said, "everything I have is yours", he aimed to dispel any inner fear. Because the younger brother had squandered his share of inheritance, he might take advantage of his older brother's portion. This father understood the unknown fear behind the older brother's complaint, so he responded and reassured him appropriately. That is proper parental guidance. Dear God, please give us a pair of listening ears, so that we become responsible fathers, guiding the path of our children.

Children are bestowed to us by God as precious gifts. We are but humble stewards, entrusted with the responsibility of raising our children in God's likeness, according to His will and perfect plan. In Galatians 6:7, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."

In conclusion, let me share with you a poem written by Dorothy Law Nolte which is a good reminder for every parent raising children. As well, we as parents need to continue to pray for our children at every stage of their lives.



let us pray...

Dear Heavenly Father,
 Thank you for giving us children;
 Help us to become faithful stewards,
 Teach us to learn to let go,
 and entrust our children to you.
 We truly believe that only You, our Heavenly Father
 know what they need;
 know what is best for them.
 Protect them so that they grow in maturity,
 May your will be done in their lives.
 We thank you Father,
 for making us your partners in child-rearing,
 so that we do not have to fight this battle alone.
 Dispel our fears of the possible dangers in life;
 Grant us a peaceful and trusting heart to rely on you,
 Trusting that you will look after and protect them.
 Because you care, Father,
 We look up to you and surrender wholeheartedly,
 We thank you for listening to our prayers,
 In your name we pray, Amen.

Children Learn What They Live

*If a child lives with criticism,
 he learns to condemn.
 If a child lives with hostility,
 he learns to fight.
 If a child lives with ridicule,
 he learns to be shy.
 If a child lives with shame,
 he learns to feel guilty.
 If a child lives with tolerance,
 he learns to be patient.
 If a child lives with encouragement,
 he learns confidence.
 If a child lives with praise,
 he learns to appreciate.
 If a child lives with fairness,
 he learns justice.
 If a child lives with security,
 he learns to have faith.
 If a child lives with approval,
 he learns to like himself.
 If a child lives with sharing,
 he learns to be generous.
 If a child lives with friendship,
 he learns to find love in the world.
 If a child lives with serenity,
 he learns to have peace of mind.*

- Dorothy Law Nolte

Upcoming Church-wide Events

KNIGHT STREET Community Day

Saturday June 12, 2010 11am - 3pm

where: 3330 Knight St.
parking lot + basement
(corner of Knight St. & 17th Ave.)

what: Join us for great fun on the inflatable slide, bouncy castle, bungee run, dunk tank, game booths; hotdogs, cotton candy, popcorn, ethnic East meets West food tasting court; info about community services, balloons, crafts, specialty booths and more!

cost: free!



Please pray for all the children and youth attending the upcoming Kidz Kamp and Teens Camp this July during Canada Day Weekend:

Kidz Kamp 2010

For children grades 1 to 6
Thurs., July 1st to Sun., July 4th
at Columbia Bible College
Abbotsford, BC

Teens Camp 2010

For teens grades 7 to 12
Thurs., July 1st to Sun., July 4th
at Capernwray Harbour Bible Centre
Thetis Island, BC

Fraser Lands Community Day

Saturday July 24, 2010 3330 S.E. Marine Dr.
12 noon - 4 pm



Meet the Staff

We are happy to welcome the newest members to our staff who has joined us recently. Here's an opportunity for you to get to know them a little better:



Pastor Teik Mien Tye

Pastor Teik Mien Tye

Fraser Lands Mandarin Assistant Congregation Pastor (Lay Pastor)

Born and grew up in Penang, Malaysia, Pastor Tye went to Canada and received his university education at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada. He graduated with a Master of Science degree majoring in Food Science. He became Christian through the Chinese Christian Fellowship. Then, he was actively serving the Lord through weekly visitations and sharing the gospel with Chinese immigrants. In 1984, as one of the representatives of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, he attended the Urbana Conference in Chicago where he received the calling from the Lord to be a full time pastor. He had a passionate heart to evangelize and building up the faith of Mandarin-speaking people, especially those coming from mainland China. He was grateful to the Lord for having the opportunities to live and work with people from mainland China. He graduated with a Master of Divinity degree from Regent College. While he was at Regent, he served as a counsellor of a Mandarin Fellowship at UBC, and helping in the Bible Studies for the Chinese scholars from UBC at University Chapel. He came to Fraser Lands in 2007 and served as a deacon, Sunday school teacher, counsellor serving the Mandarin congregation at Fraser Lands for three years before joining the pastoral team and serving as an Assistant Congregational Pastor for the Mandarin congregation at VCAC-Fraser Lands Church in 2010. At present, he is working towards his final stage of Doctor of Ministry Degree at Carey Theological College.

He enjoys reading, listening to music and singing. He is a member of the Vancouver Oratorio Society. His favourite sport is badminton. He also enjoys walking in the park. He likes spicy food and enjoys fellowship and dining out with brothers and sisters.



Cynthia & Edward Chan and daughter, Queenie.

Cynthia Chan

Knight Street Administrative Assistant (Part-Time)

Cynthia was born and raised in Hong Kong. She had never thought of becoming one of God's people until she received the Gospel from a relative in 2008. Cynthia had thought she would be a lifelong Buddhist, but through the Alpha course and the study of the Bible, she opened her obstinate mind to accept and to learn about God. Peace and hope were what she had been looking for. Now, she praises and thanks God for His salvation and His healing. She is thankful that her husband had also received God and was baptized along with her at VCAC in December 2009.

In Hong Kong, she worked in an aluminum rolling mill for 13 years. She started her career as a secretary and moved on to become a Personnel/ Admin Manager after obtaining a diploma in personnel management at the HK Polytechnic University.

She started her new life in Canada in 1990 with her husband, Edward and her daughter, Queenie. Since immigrating to Canada, she worked in many different industries including property, legal, retail and wholesale. She is grateful that she has an opportunity to join the support team at VCAC to serve God in ministry.

Cynthia's interests are singing, gardening, travelling and creating pottery. She has a passion for pottery and is looking forward to pick up this hobby again. Moreover, she wishes to become a metaphorical clay to be molded by God and to be a useful holy instrument.

The Bible verse that most uplifts her is: *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* Philippians 4:6-7.