



How to Be a Good Father

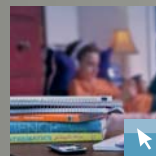


How to Be a Good Father

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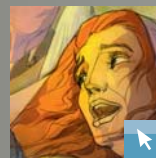


YOUNG PEOPLE ASK **HOW CAN I STOP PROCRASTINATING?**

Are you tired of always finishing your chores and homework assignments late? You really need to stop putting things off! This article will help you even if you feel overwhelmed by the task, you just don't feel motivated, or you're already too busy.

(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS/TEENAGERS)

CHILDREN



Read illustrated Bible stories. Use the activity pages to help your children improve their knowledge of Bible characters and moral principles.

(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS/CHILDREN)

Vol. 94, No. 3 / Monthly / ENGLISH
Printing Each Issue: 43,524,000 in 98 Languages

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

Awake! (ISSN 0005-237X) is published monthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; L. Weaver, Jr., President; G. F. Simons, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Awake!* 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299.

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WORLD

Eradicating hunger is more than a question of food production. It is estimated that farmers now produce sufficient food to feed 12 billion people—5 billion more than the current population of our planet. The issues are mainly problems related to economics, distribution, and waste.

BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES

Almost a quarter (24 percent) of respondents among professionals who work in finance believe that they “may need to engage in unethical or illegal conduct in order to be successful.” Sixteen percent admitted that they would commit a crime “if they could get away with it.”



ARGENTINA

In Argentina, 3 out of 5 teachers ask for time off work because of stress or violence in their workplace.



SOUTH KOREA

Individuals living alone are soon to make up the most common type of household in South Korea.



CHINA

It is thought that two thirds of Chinese cities will fail to meet the new government standards for air quality that will go into effect in 2016. In addition, the quality of water obtained from most underground sources is classified as “bad or extremely bad.”





How to Be a Good Father

“Where did I go wrong?” This question tormented Michael,* from South Africa. As hard as he had tried to be a good father, every time he thought about his wayward 19-year-old son, he wondered if he could have been a better parent.

In contrast, Terry, who lives in Spain, seems to have succeeded as a father. His son, Andrew, says: “Many of my earliest memories of my dad are of him reading to me, playing with me, and taking me on trips where he and I could spend time alone. He made learning fun.”

Admittedly, it is not easy to be a good father. But there are basic principles that can help. Many fathers have found that they and their families benefit when they follow the wisdom found in the Bible. Let us consider some of the Bible’s practical advice that can help fathers.

* Some names in this article have been changed.

1. Make Time for Your Family

As a father, how do you show your children that they are important to you? Surely there are many things you do for your children, including the sacrifices you make to feed them and provide them with an adequate home. You would not do such things if your children were not important to you. Yet, if you do not spend significant amounts of time with your children, they might conclude that you care more for other things, such as your job, your friends, or your hobbies, than you do for them.

When should a father begin to spend time with his children? A mother begins to form a bond with her child while it is still in the womb. Some 16 weeks after conception, an unborn baby might begin to hear. At this stage a father too can start to build his unique relationship with his unborn child. He can listen to the baby's heartbeat, feel it kick, talk to it, and sing to it.

Bible Principle: In Bible times men were personally involved in the education of their children. Fathers were encouraged to spend time with their children on a regular basis, as is made evident by the Bible's words at Deuteronomy 6:6, 7, which say: *"These words that I am commanding you today must prove to be on your heart; and you must inculcate them in your son and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up."*

2. Good Fathers Are Good Communicators

In order to communicate effectively with your children, you must be a careful listener. You need to cultivate the ability to listen without overreacting.

If your children think that you will lose your temper quickly and be judgmental, they will have little incentive to express their inner feelings to you. But if you listen to them calmly, you will show that you are genuinely interested in them. They will in turn be far more likely to share their precious thoughts and feelings with you.

Bible Principle: The practical wisdom found in the Bible has proved to be beneficial in many aspects of daily life. For instance, the Bible says: *"Every man must be swift about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath."* (James 1:19) Fathers who apply this Bible principle are able to communicate better with their children.

Listen calmly without being judgmental



3. Give Loving Discipline and Commendation

Even when you feel frustrated or angry, the discipline you administer should be an expression of loving concern for the long-term welfare of your child. It includes advice, correction, education, and chastisement when needed.

Furthermore, discipline is much more effective when a father commends his children regularly. An ancient proverb says: “As apples of gold in silver carvings is a word spoken at the right time for it.” (Proverbs 25:11) Commendation enriches a child’s character. Children blossom when they are acknowledged and appreciated. A father who looks for opportunities to give commendation will help to build confidence in his children and motivate them not to give up trying to do what is right.

Bible Principle: “You fathers, do not be exasperating your children, so that they do not become downhearted.” —Colossians 3:21.



4. Love and Respect Your Wife

The way a father exercises his role as a husband is certain to affect children. One group of experts on child development explains: “One of the best things a father can do for his children is to respect their mother. . . . A father and mother who respect each other and let their children know it provide a secure environment for them.”—*The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children*.*

Bible Principle: “Husbands, continue loving your wives . . . Let each one of you individually so love his wife as he does himself.”—Ephesians 5:25, 33.

* Even if a father is no longer married to his children’s mother, it is good for his children’s relationship with their mother if he treats her in a respectful and dignified manner.



A Good Father Is Not Too Busy

Sylvan, originally from Barbados, is a New York City bus driver who lives with his wife and three teenage sons. Sylvan has an especially challenging schedule, working from midafternoon until three or four o’clock in the morning. He has Thursday and Friday off, but Saturday and Sunday nights he has to work. Yet, he is not too busy for his children.

“It’s tough, but I try,” explains Sylvan. “Each of my boys needs some one-on-one time with me. Thursday afternoon is set aside for the oldest one when he gets home from school. On Friday, I schedule time for the middle boy. For the youngest one, I reserve Sunday morning.”

5. Apply God's Practical Wisdom

Fathers who have heartfelt love for God can give their children a most precious heritage—an intimate relationship with their heavenly Father.

After decades of hard work raising six children, Antonio, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, received the following note from one of his daughters: "Dear Dad, I just wanted to thank you for raising me to love Jehovah God, my neighbor, and myself—that is, to be a well-rounded individual. You showed me that you love Jehovah and that you care about me personally. Thank you, Dad, for putting Jehovah first in your life and for treating your children as gifts from God!"

Bible Principle: *"You must love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your vital force. And these words that I am commanding you today must prove to be on your heart."*
—Deuteronomy 6:5, 6.



It is obvious that there is more involved in fatherhood than these five points and that, realistically, even when you try your best to be a good father, you are not going to be a perfect one. But to the extent that you apply these principles in a loving and balanced way, you really can be a good father.* ■

* For more guidance on family life, see the book *The Secret of Family Happiness*, accessible at the Web site www.jw.org.

Fathers Who Are Appreciated

"He plays with me and reads to me at night."—Sierra, aged 5.

"We can be having tons of fun playing, and he will say, 'OK, it's time to clean up now.' At other times, after we've been working, he'll stop and say, 'Now it's time to do something fun.'" —Michael, aged 10.

"My father has never allowed his secular work or his hobbies to prevent him from helping Mom at home. Even now, after so many years, he cooks at least as often as Mom does, washes the dishes, helps with cleaning the house, and treats her with love and tenderness."—Andrew, aged 32.





Bull moose: © Alaska Stock/age fotostock

THE MOOSE

PECULIAR GIANT OF THE FOREST

“THE moose is singularly grotesque and awkward to look at. Why should it stand so high at the shoulders? Why have so long a head?” The 19th-century writer of those words, Henry David Thoreau, was hardly alone in his appraisal of the moose. Its comical appearance and the rarity of sightings of this solitary creature in the wild have fueled speculation that the moose is clumsy and slow-witted. Is that true? Researchers in North America and Eurasia have uncovered many facts about this unusual animal.

No one denies that the moose is a giant. Although this “monarch of the forest” has long legs that make it seem ungainly, those legs can fend off an entire pack of wolves. Moose learn to swim within days of birth, and they have been observed swimming for miles and diving to a depth of nearly 20 feet (6 m) to feed on water plants!

A moose can move its eyes and detect motion almost directly behind it without turning its head. Its nose is also an effective tool. Researchers suggest that because the moose’s nostrils are far apart, they may give it the unusual ability to pinpoint the location of objects on a three-dimensional scale. The moose’s hearing adds another ingredient to its sensory package. Its ears can pivot in all directions, and they can pick up sounds from

AT A GLANCE

Type: Mammal

Diet: Woody vegetation, leaves, aquatic plants

Running Speed: Up to 35 miles per hour (55 km/h)

Height: From five to seven feet (1.5 to 2 m) at the shoulder

Weight: Up to 1,800 pounds (816 kg)

other moose as far as two miles (3 km) away!

Moose calves, described by one writer as “ridiculously cute,” tend to be curious and carefree. Their mothers, called cows, protect them by providing tender and loyal care. Cows will attack any who prey on their young, including wolves, bears, and even humans. Finally, when the calf is about a year old and its mother is newly pregnant, the mother aggressively drives it away so that the yearling can begin caring for itself.

SURVIVAL IN THE NORTH

Since moose feed exclusively on plants, how do they survive cold winters? Partly by gorging themselves during warmer weather. Moose eat up to 50 pounds (23 kg) of forage daily, whether this vegetation is grown ten feet (3 m) above the ground or underwater. They make the most of this food by digesting it in a four-chambered stomach, extracting needed nutrients and building up fat. The moose, however, faces other dangers in winter.

Bitter cold and deep snow test a moose’s endurance. It favors a quiet life in the winter, economizing movement and retaining heat under its well-designed fur coat. Escape from wolves in the snow is especially difficult, but often, an even greater hazard to the moose is man—especially hunters and automobile drivers.

Moose love the concentrated nutrients found in road salt, which is spread on many northern highways to melt snow. However, because moose have dark fur and tend to cross roads after sunset, drivers have difficulty spotting them in time to avoid collisions. Both humans and moose have lost their lives because of this.



Moose calves tend to be curious and carefree

A PLAYFUL BEAST

Moose have been observed playfully attacking ocean waves and blissfully bathing in hot springs. There is tenderness evident between cows and bulls during the rut, and a cow’s loyalty to her calf is truly heartwarming. Calves adopted by humans have even formed maternal bonds with their keepers. Dr. Valerius Geist observes: “This strange animal with the ungainly face can be quick witted, affectionate, and loyal to a fault.”

A word of caution, though: The moose is a very strong and powerful wild animal. If you happen to see one in the wild, be respectful and give it plenty of space. Keeping your distance is especially vital when there are young calves nearby. Be assured, however, that even from a safe distance, you will be amazed while gazing at this peculiar giant of the forest. ■



PORNOGRAPHY

Does the Bible condemn pornography?

“Everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

—Matthew 5:28.

WHY IT MATTERS Today pornography is more popular and accessible than ever before. If you wish to please God and live a happier life, you should know how God feels about pornography.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS The Bible does not mention pornography specifically. Still, the use of pornography is in direct conflict with many Bible principles.

For instance, the Bible pointedly states that when a married man “keeps on looking at a woman” to whom he is not married, nurturing a desire to have sex with her, it can lead to adultery. The principle behind this Bible statement would apply to anyone, married or single, who “keeps on looking” at pornographic images with the desire to engage in sexual immorality. Such behavior is clearly offensive to God.



Is pornography wrong even when it does not lead to sexually immoral acts?

WHAT PEOPLE SAY Some researchers doubt that there is a significant link between pornography and real acts of sexually offensive behavior. Yet, is the use of pornography in itself immoral?

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS The Bible describes “obscene jesting” as unacceptable and immoral. (Ephesians 5:3, 4) How could pornography be any less objectionable? Today’s pornography often includes the visual recording of *real acts* of adultery, homosexuality, and other forms of fornication. Surely, the lascivious viewing of such sexually immoral acts is significantly more offensive to God than obscene speech.

Researchers continue to debate the likelihood of people acting out fantasies fueled by pornography. But the Bible clearly supports the notion that the use of pornography is in itself spiritually destructive and highly offensive to God. The Bible gives this admonition: “Deaden, therefore, your body members . . . as respects fornication [and] sexual appetite.” (Colossians 3:5) Users of pornography do exactly the opposite—rather than deadening such desires, they nurture and inflame them.

“Deaden, therefore, your body members . . . as respects fornication, uncleanness, sexual appetite, hurtful desire, and covetousness.”

—Colossians 3:5.

What can help you to avoid the use of pornography?

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS The Bible speaks of sexually promiscuous people, drunkards, and thieves, who were able to quit their destructive behavior. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) How? By applying the wisdom found in God’s Word, they learned to hate what is bad.

It is possible to learn to hate pornography by giving careful thought to the terrible consequences of this harmful vice. A recent study published by Utah State University revealed that some pornography users experience “depression, social isolation, damaged relationships,” and other sad consequences. What is more, because, as explained earlier, the viewing of pornography is offensive to God, it does something far more harmful. It alienates humans from their Creator.

The Bible can help us learn to love what is good. The more we read the Bible, the deeper our love for its moral standards will grow. That love will help us to take a firm stand against pornography and to feel the way the psalmist did who wrote: “I shall not set in front of my eyes any good-for-nothing thing.”—Psalm 101:3. ■

“Search for what is good, and not what is bad . . . Hate what is bad, and love what is good.”

—Amos 5:14, 15.



How to Set Rules for Your Teenager



THE CHALLENGE

Your teenager says you are too strict. Your instincts tell you otherwise. 'If I relax the rules,' you say to yourself, 'he will just get into trouble!'

You *can* set reasonable rules for your teenager. First, though, you need to understand what might be causing him to chafe against the rules in the first place.

Although in this article we refer to the teenager as a male, the principles discussed apply to both genders.



WHY IT HAPPENS

Myth: All teenagers rebel against rules; it's an unavoidable part of adolescence.

Fact: A teenager is less likely to rebel when parents set reasonable rules and discuss them with him.

Although a number of factors may be involved in rebellion, parents may unwittingly encourage it if their rules are inflexible or no longer age appropriate. Consider the following:

Inflexible. When parents lay down the law and there is no room for discussion, rules become more like a strait-jacket that stifles the teen rather than a seat belt that protects him. As a result, he may secretly engage in the very acts that his parents forbid.

No longer age appropriate. "Because I said so" may be enough explanation for a young child, but adolescents need more—they need reasons. After all, in the near future, your teenager may be living on his own and making weighty decisions. It's far better that he learn to reason well and make good decisions now, while he's still under your supervision.

But what can you do if your teenager constantly seems to be irritated by your rules?



WHAT YOU CAN DO

First, realize that teenagers need—and deep down even *want*—boundaries. So **set rules, and make sure your teenager understands them.** “When adolescents are given clear boundaries and expect a reasonable amount of parental supervision, they are less likely to engage in worrisome behaviors,” says the book *Letting Go With Love and Confidence*. In contrast, uninvolved parents who grant their teenagers too much freedom give the impression that they do not care. And that is a recipe for rebellion.—*Bible principle: Proverbs 29:15.*

How, then, can you show balance? **Let your teenager express himself** about family rules. For example, if he asks for an adjustment to his curfew, **listen** to him as he presents his case. A teenager who knows that he has been fully heard is more likely to respect and comply with the decision you make—even if he does not agree with it.—*Bible principle: James 1:19.*

Before making a decision, though, remember this: While teenagers tend to ask for more freedom than they should have, parents may tend to grant less freedom than they could. So **give serious consideration to your teenager’s request.** Has he demonstrated that he is responsible? Do the circumstances warrant a concession? Be willing to bend when appropriate.—*Bible principle: Genesis 19:17-22.*

Besides listening to your teenager’s feelings, make sure that you **let your teenager know your concerns** as well. By doing so, you may teach him to consider not only his wishes but also the feelings of others.—*Bible principle: 1 Corinthians 10:24.*

Finally, **make a decision and explain your reasons for it.** Even if he is not thrilled with the decision, likely he is glad to have parents who will hear him out. Remember, an adolescent is an adult in training. By setting reasonable rules and discussing them with your teenager, you will help him grow to become a responsible adult.—*Bible principle: Proverbs 22:6.* ■

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Let your reasonableness become known.”
—Philippians 4:5.

“Do not be exasperating your children, so that they do not become downhearted.”
—Colossians 3:21.

FOR TEENAGERS

“Imagine a man who owes money to a bank. If he makes his payments regularly, he’ll earn the bank’s trust and the bank may even extend more credit to him in the future. It’s similar at home. You owe your parents your obedience. If you prove trustworthy—even in small things—your parents are likely to trust you more in the future. Of course, if you continually let your parents down, don’t be surprised if they reduce or even close your ‘line of credit.’”
—From *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volume 2, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.



ROBERT BOYLE

History buffs might remember Robert Boyle as the scientist who gave his name to Boyle's law—a natural law that sets out the connection between pressure and volume in gases. His momentous discovery laid the basis for countless scientific developments that followed. But Robert Boyle was more than an able man of science. He is also considered to have been a man of great faith in God and His inspired Word, the Bible.

QUICK FACTS:

- ▶ Born in Ireland in 1627.
- ▶ Called the father of chemistry.
- ▶ The first scientist of note to publish detailed descriptions of his methods for conducting controlled experiments.
- ▶ His writings greatly influenced Sir Isaac Newton, a younger contemporary.
- ▶ Promoted the translation of the Bible into many languages.
- ▶ Died in England in 1691 at the age of 64.

BOYLE was born into a wealthy family at Lismore Castle, in Ireland, in 1627. That was near the beginning of what historians call the age of reason—a time when thinking men tried to free mankind from the fanaticisms that had enslaved the human race for centuries. Boyle shared that goal. In an autobiography of his early years, he gave himself the name Philaretus, meaning “Lover of Virtue.”

Boyle's desire to learn the truth was matched by an equally intense desire to share everything he learned with others. He became a prolific writer, whose writings had a profound effect on many of his contemporaries, including the famous scientist Sir Isaac Newton. In 1660, Boyle became one of the founders of the Royal Society, a scientific institution that still exists in London, England.

A MAN OF SCIENCE

Boyle has been described as the father of chemistry. He took a completely different approach from that of the alchemists of his day. They kept their findings secret or else wrote them in obscure terms that few people outside their closed circle could understand. In contrast, Boyle openly published all the details of his work. Further, instead of simply accepting long-held hypotheses, he championed the use of controlled experiments to establish the facts.

Boyle insisted that those with strong opinions should carefully distinguish between the things they *knew* to be true and those they *thought* to be true

Boyle's experiments supported the idea that matter was composed of what he called corpuscles, particles of some kind, that combined in different ways to form different substances.

Boyle's approach to scientific research is summed up well in his famous book *The Sceptical Chymist*. There he recommends that scientists avoid being arrogant or dogmatic and be willing to admit mistakes. Boyle insisted that those with strong opinions should carefully distinguish between the things they *knew* to be true and the things they *thought* to be true.

A MAN OF FAITH

Boyle took the same approach when it came to spiritual matters. What he discovered about the universe and the marvelous construction of living creatures convinced him that there must be a Designer and Creator. So he rejected the growing spirit of atheism among the intelligentsia of his day. No one who used his power of reason honestly, Boyle concluded, could fail to believe in God.

However, Boyle did not think that human reason alone was the way to true enlightenment. He saw the need for some kind of revelation from God. That revelation, he said, was God's Word, the Bible.

Boyle was troubled to see that many were unfamiliar with Bible teachings and seemed to have no solid foundation for their religious beliefs. How can it be right, he asked, that a person's religious beliefs be based solely on what his parents believed or on where he happened to be born? Boyle developed an intense desire to help people deepen their knowledge of the Bible.

To this end, Boyle gave money to support the publishing of the Bible in many languages. These included some of the languages of native North Americans, as well as Arabic, Irish, Malay, and Turkish. Robert Boyle thus proved himself to be a gifted yet humble man with an insatiable desire to find the truth in all matters and to help others do the same. ■

THE BIBLE IN IRISH

Robert Boyle was aware that as far back as 1573, a group of scholars had started to translate parts of the Bible into Irish. In 1602, they published in Irish the part that is commonly known as the New Testament. Later, in 1640, the Irish translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, commonly called the Old Testament, was completed. This particular version was not printed until 1685, after Boyle gave his financial support to the project. Interestingly, the books of the Apocrypha had also been translated into Irish. The Apocrypha is a collection of non-Biblical writings often bound with the Bible and published with it as one book. However, Boyle, being a lover of truth, refused to publish those spurious books.

Courtesy of the Yale University Library





The Jumping Spider's Blurry Vision



Courtesy Rundstedt Rojillos

THE jumping spider has a special vision system that enables it to calculate the precise distance it needs to jump. How does the spider do it?

Consider: To measure its distance from an object, the jumping spider exploits a unique feature of its two principal eyes, each of which has a “staircase” retina with multiple layers. While one layer receives green light in sharp focus, another receives it as a blurry image. The more out of focus an image appears in that layer, the closer the object is to the spider’s eye. This simple fact enables the spider to calculate the exact distance it has to jump to catch its prey.

Researchers would like to copy the jumping spider’s technique in order to create 3-D cameras and even robots that can measure the distance to an object. According to the online news site Science-NOW, the jumping spider’s vision provides “an exciting example of how half-centimeter-long [0.2 in.] animals with brains smaller than those of house flies still manage to gather and act on complex visual information.”

What do you think? Did the use of blurry vision by the jumping spider come about by evolution? Or was it designed? ■

