

UPWARD THOUGHT

SEARCH



Explaining the prophecies and the scriptures to all who desire to hear them. (Mosiah 27:35-36)

The Father of fathers: Ramblings on father's day

By Rob • June 21, 2020

Yesterday I had the misfortune of being at Target. While musing about the

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pretense of people who "don't go to Walmart," I overheard a woman with one child who asked an employee "do you guys have 'stuff' for father's day?" She said she was looking for "a hat that said dad or something."

Labels*fathers**men**women*

I turned to my wife, who was with me, and whispered, "don't do it! He doesn't want that, I promise!" She challenged me to conduct an intervention with the woman, but even if I am not yet wise, I am getting old enough to notice more ways in which people indicate they know full well what is right even while choosing what is wrong.

It is quite amazing to note just how endemic poor gift choice is among wives. It's an inside joke among men. The wife expects something

like a cruise or new car for her prescribed holiday, but thinks a comparable gift for her husband is a pair of socks, a shirt he would never buy nor has ever requested, or pity sex [1].

Here's the funny thing: In almost every case, the husband expects *nothing* "for father's day," and would probably prefer nothing to a gift that has no thought behind it [2]. There is a gospel lesson in this.

Do you know why God wants acknowledgement? The only reason is because you get more out of it that way. He does nothing except to benefit the world. Therefore, in anything he asks, you can learn something about his character by asking, "how does this benefit the world?" When it comes to acknowledging

him in all things, the answer to the question of "how does this benefit the world?" is that through recognizing what he does for you, you gain reasons to trust him more than you do. That's it.

Do you know what it means to "glorify God"? We read that the work and glory of God is to bring about eternal life for man (see Moses 1:39). You glorify God through improving. You glorify God through changing in a way that makes you better. That's it.

The best gift you can give to God is a greater degree of change towards being better than you are now.

To the degree that a man is like unto God, he will

denominate his worth (his glory) in the degree of positive change he has made possible in others.

What brings joy to a righteous father is not a present. It is the gift of seeing greater joy in those he loves, which is only possible through their improvement.

The best gift you can give to a righteous man is choosing to do what is right under more circumstances, or choosing to understand what is right and what is wrong to a greater degree. Everything of worth to a righteous man falls into these two categories.

And so we see that a woman who gives a gift that belies their lack of thought and appreciation for what he has done for them

commits a doubly hurtful action. Not only does she not think of or appreciate what he has done for her, but she glorifies in what ought to be an obvious sin by openly mocking him. This is akin to offering "strange fire" to God: a sacrifice "to God" that he explicitly said not to do in the place of what he did actually ask for. This is why obedience is greater than sacrifice (see 1 Samuel 15:22). That "#1 Dad" hat that you bought the day of father's day isn't at all what he wants or cares about. You are buying it as fuel to perpetuate your lie to yourself that you actually care.

While reading the news recently I saw some article whose headline said something like: "I am a stay at home mother whose husband makes \$100,000 per year. Will we ever get to retire?" I

was flabbergasted at the audacity of this question. I thought about what I would say if a woman asked me that. I haven't polished my answer. The short answer would probably be something like: "Lady, you retired the day you married your husband." The long answer would include the fact that the average person in the US makes about \$35,000 per year, fewer than 25% of women have the luxury of being stay at home moms, and being a stay at home mom requires orders of magnitude fewer time and toil than at any time in history. If a woman gets to be a full time mother and her husband makes 3x the average salary, she has won the lottery. She was born into a time such that women have never had easier lives and, even in that time, has married a husband that makes more money than some 90% of other people in one of the

wealthiest nations in the world and in history. She literally has a better life than most queens throughout history. A person asking a question like that is guaranteed to have an inexplicably ungrateful perspective on her husband, what he has accomplished, what he sacrifices, what little she does in return (what does a 3x normal mother or wife look like, what is the likelihood she measures up to that given her question? [3]), and the immense degree of luxury she has as a result, no matter how mundane folding the laundry might seem.

Do you see what I am getting at? Can a woman such as this derive the happiness she is being offered? Is she benefiting like she could from what her husband gives her? Of what purpose and value is the gift her husband gives her if she

does not perceive it or value it?

Some of you will say "man, you are making a really big deal out of this. What is your problem? Did your mother not hug you enough when you were a kid?" First, realize that those who hate sin more than others do so only because they have a more accurate view of its consequences than others. Second, the little things are the big things. If someone is guilty of what I describe here, the symptoms of the actual problem no doubt spread like veins through their whole life. The core problem is a fundamental misunderstanding of their place in this world with respect to others' places in this world, and until that is made more accurate, they will be significantly limited in the improvement that otherwise could be theirs. In fact, they are

guaranteed to be damned to hell. Is anything more important than helping people see the chains with which they are bound and giving them the key to release them?

Now, I know we are painting with broad strokes here. Many (most?) husbands are unworthy of marriage. Many women are mistreated by their husbands, and some women are truly exceptional. An honest person will not be offended beyond what benefits them. They will see what applies and what does not.

[1] - It's kind of sad that I have to disclaim this, but from past experience, I do: When I talk about sin, I am not necessarily talking about *my* sin or the sins of those in my immediate family. When I talk about women or wives or marriage, I

am not necessarily talking about my wife.

Nothing I write is written as a passive aggressive vent about people I interact with face-to-face.

Anyone who knows me knows that I will always say what I think needs saying without hesitation.

Anything I write that intersects what I have said to specific people is at best a generally applicable summary of things I have already said to peoples' faces.

[2] - Yes, many husbands do the same toward their wives. Shame on them. Here is a pro tip for those of both genders who detest prescribed holidays for the tendency they have of stripping away any thought in favor of a timed gift purchase: As you go about your days, when you think of a nice gift for someone, buy it and store it in a no-go zone in your house, such as a clearly

marked box in your closet. When the next prescribed holiday comes around, distribute the gift. This way you can live both the spirit and the letter of society's silly laws.

[3] - There are definitely situations where the wife is a better woman than the husband is a man. These situations are equally as sad, and **I have written about this previously**. It is sad enough that great discrepancies exist, but these are made oh-so-much worse through our dishonest assessment of them--in fact, we flat out refuse to acknowledge them. Once we had a house guest who went out of her way to give my wife more-than-honest compliments about each dinner she cooked. She would then glare at me expecting me to chime in as if I were a dry pump of compliments that only needed some priming.

As with many things in my life, I saw and knew what was really going on, but left it alone because doing anything different would not benefit. That changed when after a few days of this, she made the mistake of making her objective explicit by saying something like, "Rob, don't you think this food is wonderful? Why don't you tell your wife so?" I said something like, "You've been here several days. I have been working at my two jobs each of those days. When I come home, has my wife ever thanked me for working so hard against such odds to buy her this food or the time to cook it? No? Then why should I thank her for doing what is obviously the least she could do given what I have done and continue to do for her?" This story will no doubt offend many, who don't realize their offense incriminates them, not me.

If I made meager money or was lazy or cheated on my wife or gained 200 lbs, or did any of an endless number of things to change the ratio of who provides what in our household, it would be completely appropriate for everyone to acknowledge that. We can't hope to navigate reality beyond our willingness to see things as they really are. Ignoring what is true does not benefit anyone.

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