

## Be a NEW TESTAMENT PARENT



Jesus came to earth to reveal God's nature more clearly than pictured in the Old Testament.. He helps us each see God as "Our Father". In the Old Testament God calls himself "Father" in less than 15 verses. In the New Testament he calls us "my children" and refers to himself as "Father" well over 200 times. These two hundred plus verses make it clear that part of Jesus goal in coming to earth was to help us understand the Father heart of God, a supernatural heart that beats for each of his children.

God reveals himself to us as "The Model Parent".

There is clear difference between God's Old Testament parenting with an emphasis on Behavior and his New Testament emphasis on "Our Need". We note in the old Testament God's cautions about our bad behavior: stubbornness, selfishness, and rule breaking. God's New Testament spotlight shines on our "Neediness", our need for him, much more than on our human wickedness. As human parents then which should we give more attention to meeting our children's need or the endless struggle to "fix" their behavior. God's model of the Perfect Parent is to look on their need and meet it with "Love". Love never fails.

A second facet of God's parenting skill spotlighted in the New Testament parent is his decision to SEE his children not as they are, but as they will become. In short he sees what Sacrifice will do for a child, how his children will be transformed. God the model parent holds on to his dream, his vision for what the child will become. The New Testament idea of being transformed is one cornerstone of God's model as a perfect parent. As human parents we should borrow this idea of holding a dream of what our children will become. The new testament Father (parent) delights in catching his children being good, CELEBRATES each step they take to reaching their parents precious dream for them. Should we not do the same. All good parents must pay attention to the times their children get thing wrong, the GREAT parent however catches them being good.

The new testament reveals a God, a Father who gives his children a second chance. My own experience with this was with the worst behaving four year old in all of creation. He was on time out so often we had to reinforce the chair. One day I asked if he would rather have another time out or mercy. He said 'What is Mercy'. I said "That is where you promise not to do that again and I don't give you a time out". He said "I will have Mercy please" And it worked. At age four he learned repentance and self control BECAUSE he had received Mercy. As human parents should we not give our children a second chance, even a third or forth? Is there any other way to help them learn "Self" control...sort of like trusting them with the car.

The New Testament is "rich" with images of God as a model father but this image does actually start in the old testament. It is in the four verses immediately following the great commandment:

*“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” that God’s parent heart is revealed. The next word is “AND” and introduces the second half of the greatest commandment, the four verses following the “And”.*

**THE FOUR PARENTING VERSES THAT FOLLOW THE GREATEST  
COMMANDMENT Deut. 6:6-9**

“These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

These verses, connected to the great commandment give even new testament parents the one thing we all need most: REMINDERS.

As New Testament parents we must focus on our children’s needs more than their behavior. We must hold to and share our dream of what we wish them to be, even when it is difficult. We must offer them mercy and a chance to repent as a step to self control. We must share Bible verses as God commands in BOTH old and New Testament. **Above all we must remember the inspired words of Theodore Spurgeon: “if we would see our children saved we must let God save us, utterly and completely.”**

Charles White is a retired Christian pre school teacher and web editor of [www.bibleparent.com](http://www.bibleparent.com)