

### Acts 8:4-8 NIV

“Honoring a faithful dad”

“Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city.”

**The New Testament tells of four different men named Philip.**

**One Philip was a son of King Herod the Great by his wife Mariamne.**

Thinking Mariamne had an affair with his best friend, Herod killed and his friend.

Herod later discovered their innocence so he built impressive monuments to them and a brother, whom he'd killed, too.

**Herod killed two other sons that Mariamne had borne to him.**

**Another son named Philip was borne to Herod's fifth wife, Cleopatra of Jerusalem.**



Three of Herod's monuments

**Some thought it just as dangerous to be a relative as to be an enemy of Herod.**

No one would have nominated Herod, The Great to be *Father of the Year*.

**Two followers of Jesus shared the name Philip. First was Philip the Apostle.**

Our text tells of a second Philip, one of seven men overseeing the Jerusalem needy program.

**The Greek name Philip means lover of horses.**

**How much Philip loved horses I don't know, but he definitely loved God.**

**Whether his parents gave him the name Philip or he acquired it, I can't say, either.**

Philip excelled as an evangelist (one who proclaims Jesus' good news).

**Philip distinguished himself as a father.**

Chapter 21 of *Acts* describes Paul's and Silas' return from Paul's third missionary trip:

“We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for a day.

“Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.”<sup>1</sup>

When a couple has four daughters and all actively tell God’s word, that quartet probably had a great mom and dad.

We know nothing about the girls’ mom, but I suspect she was a good, godly woman.

**Yet Philip was familiar with the Scriptures.**

**If a stranger were reading from Isaiah, the prophet and asked your help to understand the passage, could you begin from that OT Scripture and lead that person to Jesus?**

**Philip knew God’s Word:**

**1) First today, a Bible truth most people reject.**

**What Bible concept do people deny?**

They dislike the truth that some slavery is good.

**The Greeks, who considered themselves free, rational, and sophisticated hated the idea.**

**They refused to be thought of as slaves.**

**Most of us don’t like that notion, either.**

**You’ve possibly thought and said this:**

**“I’m not anyone’s slave. Nobody’s going to tell me what to do!”**

**Many don’t recognize this fact:**

Those who say, “**Nobody will tell me what to do,**” are usually slaves to pride.

**Imagine someone giving another good advice.**

Instead of considering the advice, that person does what many do:

Stomps his/her feet, closes his/her eyes; yells, “**Don’t tell me what to do!**”

**If we are so angry or so full of pride, we won’t listen to good advice, we’re slaves.**



**Most Christians consider the Apostle Paul a great theologian—someone who loved deeply.**

Paul wrote the great love chapter that concludes:

**“There abide faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love.”**

**Paul penned this great love treatise after he began serving Jesus.**

**Before he accepted Christ, hate enslaved him.**

**He rejected reason and said so:**

**“At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions**

<sup>1</sup> Acts 21: 7-9 NIV

and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another,” (Titus 3:3 NIV).

**Paul admitted his slavery, didn't he?**

**“When did Paul stomp his feet, close his eyes, and refuse to listen?” you ask.**

**Recall Stephen's trial in Acts 6 & 7.**

The Holy Spirit chose Stephen first of the Seven. Stephen was an unselfish, thoughtful man and he tried to reason with people about Jesus.

In Jerusalem one day, Stephen said something that irked many religious leaders.

**Some of them came from a region called Cilicia, an area now in S.E. Turkey.**

These men argued with Stephen, “but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke,” (Acts 6:10 NIV).

They later became “furious and gnashed their teeth at him,” Acts 7:54.

**Those religious guys got absolutely livid.**

“They covered their ears, and yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him,” (Acts 7: 57).

Paul was one of those guys from Cilicia: stomping his feet; closing his eyes; and yelling

**“Don't tell me what's right!”**

**When Paul became a believer, he gave up that enslavement to anger and pride.**

**As an Apostle, Paul sometimes opened his letters by calling himself a slave of Jesus.<sup>2</sup>**

A slave is a person who has someone or something telling him/her what to do.

**If we insist, “No one tells me what to do,” we're slaves to pride, bitterness, and ego.**

Think of those who become slaves to alcohol, drugs, gambling, anger, and lust.

Those types of slavery lead to destruction.

Some might take a little longer than others, but they all result in destruction.

**If we're slave to any of those things we mentioned, there's only one way to freedom.**

**Someone more powerful must take charge.**

**Only God has the power to free us.**

The Lord's way leads us to life; not destruction.

**So Christians are slaves, too.**

**God tells them what to do in Christ.**

**He is “the way, the truth and the life.”**



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<sup>2</sup> See the Epistles to the Romans and the Philippians.



**Point two, today:**

**2) God gave dads a tough assignment.**

**His slavery includes mature parenthood.**

**God holds husbands-fathers responsible for leading their families.**

Many grown, muscular fellows who clearly outweigh their wives shudder at the thought of being a family leader.

**Edgar Guest's poem "A Slice of Life" humorously illustrates how tough being a father can be at times.**

"Most every night when they're in bed, And both their little prayers have said, They shout for me to come upstairs And tell them tales of grizzly bears, And Indians and gypsies bold, And eagles with the claws that hold A baby's weight, and fairy sprites That roam the woods on starry nights.

And I must illustrate these tales, Must imitate the northern gales That toss the Indian's canoe, And show the way he paddles, too. If in the story comes a bear, I have to pause and sniff the air And show the way he climbs the trees To steal the honey from the bees.

And then I buzz like angry bees And sting

him on his nose and knees And howl in pain, till Mother cries: "**That pair will never shut their eyes, While all that noise up there you make; You're simply keeping them awake.**" And then they whisper: "**Just one more,**" And once again I'm forced to roar.

New stories every night they ask, And that is not an easy task; I have to be so many things, The frog that croaks, the lark that sings, The cunning fox, the frightened hen; But just last night they stumped me, when They wanted me to twist and squirm And imitate an angle worm.

At last they tumble off to sleep, And softly from their room I creep And brush and comb the shock of hair I tossed about to be a bear. Then mother says: "**Well, I should say You're just as much a child as they.**"

But you can bet I'll not resign That storytelling job of mine."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "A Slice of Life" by Edgar A. Guest. Dr. Wade Ruby, Head of the English Department at Pepperdine College used to say that one should read poetry as if it were prose and not according to the poetic form. That's why I structured this poem as seen above.

**Some think that fathers were perfect dads in the old days.**

**History indicates otherwise.**

**Any dad looking for a Bible role model faces a problem:**

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Samuel, David, and Solomon were not role-model dads; I'm not sure about Moses, either.

**Only God is a perfect father.**

Yet, the couple he created failed big time.

**Even when we do our best, there are no guarantees our offspring will be perfect kids.**

**God's Word gives the best advice ever:**

"Love GOD, your God, with your whole heart: love him with all that's in you, love him with all you've got! Write these commandments . . . on your hearts. Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night. Tie them on your hands and foreheads as a

reminder; inscribe them on the doorposts of your homes . . ."<sup>4</sup>

**What if we fail? We don't give up in despair.**

**I saw three major flaws in my dad.**

- 1) He was short-tempered.
- 2) He didn't have a great relationship with mom.
- 3) He didn't spend a lot of time with us kids.

I told myself, I wouldn't make my dad's mistakes.

**Yet our kids could easily criticize me similarly.**

- 1) I often had a short fuse.
- 2) I didn't always properly treat Norma.
- 3) I didn't spend enough time with the kids.

**Do you feel like you could have done better?**

Confess your failures and faults,

Accept God's forgiveness,

Do your best in the future.

**Once we make the change from being slaves of unrighteousness to being slaves of God's goodness--we have increasingly better days.**

**Happy Father's Day!**

**And hang in there, dads.**

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<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 6: 5-9 *The Message*.