

Godly Fathers

(This series of lessons was compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources and many teachers over a period of thirty years. The compiler is very grateful for their wisdom.)

Introduction: Luke 15:20 "...But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."

- A. There are some today who would like to make the Bible gender neutral. They would like to remove all the references to God as Father. God, in their edited version, would become our divine parent instead of our heavenly Father.
 - 1. It is not an accident that God has been revealed to us as Father. God wants to be known as Father.
 - 2. To think that God would deny the truth of who He is to accommodate the thinking of our culture is to accuse God of duplicity.
 - 3. To assign the reason God is known as Father to mistakes of the biblical writers is to deny the total inspiration of the Scriptures.
- B. God intentionally revealed Himself as Father because He is Father. Father reveals something of His nature, something He wants us to understand.
 - 1. We live in an age where fatherhood has been depreciated. The traditional understanding of the family is under constant attack.
 - 2. From the homosexuals and lesbians, who advocate same sex marriages, to the widespread acceptance of unwed motherhood as normal, the traditional family has taken some severe assaults.
 - 3. The radical feminists would have us believe that the real problem with society is men. To them the idea of a traditional family headed by a father is a setback for women and for society.
 - 4. Into this self-proclaimed wise culture, God as Father, through His word still speaks, declaring the vital importance of being a father and honoring fatherhood.

I. THE INFLUENCE OF FATHERS

A. The Disappearing Dad, Time magazine cover story on fatherhood in June 28, 1993 issue: "Well into the 18th century, childrearing manuals in America were generally addressed to fathers, not mothers. But as the industrialization began to separate home and work, fathers could not be in both places at once. Family life in the 19th century was defined by what historians call the feminization of the domestic sphere and the marginalization of the father as a parent."

- 1. "Studies of young criminals have found that more than 70% of all juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes. Children from broken families are nearly twice as likely as those in two-parent families to drop out of high school."
 - 2. The number of children who live with their biological fathers has steadily dropped since 1960. In a survey only 34% said that they considered their own father to be a role model.
- B. Fathers have tremendous power over the lives of their children. I'm not talking about the physical power which they exert in the home, but about the

emotional and psychological power that comes from the position of father.

1. Like it or not, we are shaped by our fathers more than we think.
2. There is something within us that makes us want to please our father, and we need to feel his approval of our lives.
3. Fathers provide certain necessary characteristics in the home without which children do not receive the balance and emotional strength for future years.

C. Parable of the Prodigal Son - Luke 15:11-32

1. Think how this father felt. He had brought this son into the world, nurtured him, taught him to work, shared his life with him, and now, the boy was ready to throw it all away for the sake of a good time.
2. How do fathers feel when children exhibit a careless disregard for what is right and good?
3. Homes need fathers, Christian fathers. Someone must make the hard choices and tough decisions that often require one to put aside his feelings in favor of a necessary good. Prov. 13:24 - "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him."

II. BLUEPRINT FOR FATHERS

A. The Problem

1. A widespread loss of VISION for the future. For years our society was focused on preparing for the future. Instead, IMMEDIATE happiness has become the all-consuming goal for many adults. More and more dads put their individual preferences ahead of the needs of their children. They care more about about having a good time than they do the investment in the FUTURE that children represent.

2. A loss of PRIORITIES. Men are prone to finding their identity through WORK rather than FAMILY and so they tend to focus on things like work achievements, high salary, and job title. As a result, many no longer adhere to the philosophy that says that raising great kids is important. In his book, Man in the Mirror, Patrick Morley says that when his children were toddlers, he was always uptight about the new scratches which showed up daily on their coffee table. He writes, "This was a real point of contention with my wife, who could care less about such matters. My blood boiled when I spotted a new nick in the luster of the smooth-grained wood. Finally, Patsy couldn't take it anymore and said, 'You leave my children alone! I'll not have you ruining a million-dollar child over a \$300 table!'"

3. A loss of a sense of DUTY and COMMITMENT. Many fathers no longer feel a responsibility to SACRIFICE for their kids. A selfish young father pointed at his infant son and said, "There goes my chance for ever having a boat. As soon as I get the hospital bill paid, he'll need braces, and by the time I get those paid for, he'll want a car. When it's paid off, it'll be time to pay for college. By then I'll be too old to want a boat." Being a father requires sacrifices on our part. There are some things we have to do without in life because we have a greater obligation to provide for our children.

B. The Results

1. Fatherless children are more likely to commit crimes and engage in substance abuse.

2. On average fatherless children score lower on tests and have lower grade point averages.
3. Children of father-absent families are five times more likely to be poor and ten times more likely to be extremely poor.
4. Adolescents in mother-only families are more likely to be sexually active, and daughters are more likely to become single-parent mothers.
5. As many as 75% of teen suicides and 80% of psychiatric admissions come from broken homes, families where the father did not do his God-given job. - 2Cor. 6:18; Matt. 9:6

IV. A FATHER LOVES UNCONDITIONALLY

- A. Psalm 103; Rom. 5:8
- B. We love our children the moment they come into the world. Those little helpless babies have done nothing to earn our love—but we love them anyway, just because they're ours
- C. Too many times we only express our affection for our kids when they do something good like graduating from high school or getting a good grade on a test or something. This leads them to believe our love is conditional.

V. A FATHER GIVES SACRIFICIALLY

- A. John 3:16; James 1:17
- B. There are two primary things fathers must give children: resources and time. Most dads make sure the children's material needs are met.
 1. But what about the time? Eph. 6:4
 2. More than 40 percent of American adults have no weekly contact with children at all. Children were miked up to test parental interaction. The average amount of daily time each Dad spent with his kids was 37 seconds. Compare this to the 4 hours per day that kids spend watching TV plus the time they spend in school or listening to music or on the computer and we see who is really the father to our children.
- C. If we are to positively impact our children we must love them enough to find a way to give them our time.

VI. A FATHER REQUIRES

- A. A good father has expectations for His children. He doesn't do everything for his children. He requires a certain level of responsibility from his children.
- B. Does God give blessings to his children without expectation or condition?
- C. What happens when a father does not require good behavior of his children?
 1. Eli - 1Sam. 2:12, 28
 2. David - 1Kings 1:6

VII. A FATHER PREPARES HIS CHILDREN FOR THE FUTURE

- A. To be the right kind of person: honest, productive, fair, and considerate
 1. Amber observing me get too much change. They need to see you do what you teach.
- B. A father prepares his children to develop healthy relationships: to cultivate the right kind of friends and how to be the right kind of friend.

1. Do not be squeamish about monitoring and regulating their friendships. Everyone will lose if you do not.
- C. A father helps his children to prepare for his or her life work:
 1. Identify their gifts, skills, and interests so they can discover the work that is best for them, and encourage them to choose honorable work.
 2. Teach them how to work
 - a. Be a good employee (above and beyond) Col. 3:23 - "I work for ISG!" No, you work for the Lord.
 - b. Give them work and responsibility - Lam. 3:27
- D. Help them to grow and develop spiritually:
 1. You do not accomplish that by putting secular matters before spiritual
 - a. You cannot do that by immoral behavior at home
 - b. You cannot do that by reserving spiritual discussions to services
 - c. You cannot do that and allow filth in the home (TV, music, etc)
 - d. You cannot wait until your children are nearly grown to begin
 2. Do you have a natural enthusiasm for things such as prayer, Bible Study, church work and caring for the needs of others?
 3. Spiritual guidance cannot be delegated to others. Our children's Bible teachers are the best, but they aren't the ones entrusted with the task of making your children followers of Jesus. That's your job!
 - a. If Junior is in the parking lot bullying other children, if Sally Sue is dressing like a tramp at age 12, that reflects on you, Dad!

VIII. FATHERS ARE MEN OF TENDERNESS

- A. A building is more than just structural steel; it is unlivable until some refinements are imposed upon it.
 1. Likewise a man must be more than merely masculine.
 2. *2Tim. 2:22-25* - A man of strength only won't do this.
 3. *1Peter 3:7* - A man of strength only won't do this.
 - a. He is too busy honoring himself.
 4. *Luke 18:16* - "Permit the little children to come to Me."
 - a. How do children respond to us? Do they trust us when they are troubled and afraid?
 - b. Ever wonder why teens go to their peers for answers?
 5. *John 8:7* - compassion on the sinful woman.
 - a. No double standard here; no self-righteousness.
 6. *Gal. 5:22-23* - Humble?
 - a. Reason why men of strength only mock these things is that they can't do them.
 7. He is attentive. Treats women like ladies. Chivalrous.
 8. Refined, courteous, emotionally reserved
 9. Does cursing make one more masculine? Foul mouth, tough talk, aggressive behavior just shows that there is a poor little boy down inside acting out for attention.
 10. A real man of strength and tenderness is satisfied that God knows he is a man; he doesn't need to prove himself to anyone.

IX. FATHERS ARE MEN OF GOD

- A. No greater joy than to know that one's children walk in truth.
 - 1. *2John 1-4; 3John 1-4*
 - 2. How?
- B. Abraham - *Gen. 18:17-19* - Directed his house by example
 - 1. The true head of the house sets the standard of behavior.
 - 2. More than just laying down the law; it is first living the law yourself.
 - 3. Your examples teaches the children what you mean when you speak of honesty, hard work, obedience, love...
- C. Joshua - *Joshua 24:14-15* - Directed his house by vow
 - 1. There is immense power in the influence of a man who stands for truth.
 - 2. Children sense this power and are secure, trusting it for guidance.
 - 3. Children are also quick to sense bombast and disingenuousness.
- D. Manoah - *Judges 13:8,12* - Directed his house by prayer for the right rule
 - 1. Godly fathers do not consider themselves infallible; they pray for assistance from the most qualified Father in the universe.
 - 2. Manoah wanted to raise a servant of the Lord.
 - 3. What do mere men fathers want their sons to grow up to be?
- E. Jonadab - *Jer. 35:5-10* - Directed his house by respect for authority
 - 1. Father said no, and that is enough for us.
 - 2. How many respect God's authority in this way?
 - 3. Fathers, do you live in such a fashion that your children are pleased to keep your instructions even when you are not around?
 - 4. What kind of changes in your life are necessary to bring this about?
- F. Prodigal fathers bring forth troubled children.
 - 1. The hardest lesson you will ever teach your children will be that you will reap what you sow.
 - a. *Gal. 6:7-8; Psalm 78:4-7*
 - b. Children often take the parents mistakes to the next level.
 - 2. The influence you are now exerting in your home is shaping your children. Unfaithfulness in early life often has more power over children than repentance in later years.
 - 3. If you smoke, don't be surprised if your son takes up drugs.
 - 4. If you keep a six-pack in the 'fridge, don't be shocked if your daughter comes home drunk, not knowing what happened to her that night.
 - 5. If you watch dirty movies, don't be shocked if your child says, "Dad, I'm in trouble."
 - 6. When you violate hunting, traffic, or tax laws, expect the police to knock on your door one night with your son in cuffs.
 - 7. When you miss services freely, look forward to your children abandoning the church altogether.
 - 8. When you backbite the brethren, know that your children will someday refuse the gospel call.
 - 9. We will reap what we sow!

Conclusion:

- A. Dad was in a bad accident as a teen and did not finish school; I have acquired enough college hours over the years to close a master's degree
 - 1. Dad was a warehouseman for Weirton Steel; I work in an office
 - 2. Dad is a deacon; I am an elder
- B. And I was blessed to become these things because he did his job as a father.
 - 1. Scarcely does a week go by without me going aside with him to seek his counsel on some matter.
 - 2. I am what I am primarily because of the influence of Paul B. Blake
 - 3. Fathers and grandfathers shape the generations coming after them.
May we be as successful with our children as they were with us.