

## Godly Fathers, Faithful Leaders

- *Deuteronomy 32:45-47*

- Few subjects bring as much joy to the hearts of parents than to see their children grow up and mature into a strong faith in Christ. On the other side of the coin, few subjects bring as much grief to the hearts of parents as the falling away of the faith of their children when they reach adulthood.
- Church, as a country, we are losing our young people by the groves and we are so consumed with our own lives & bringing home a paycheck that we don't even notice until it is too late.
  - 43% of US children live without their father [US Department of Census]
  - 90% of homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes. [US D.H.H.S., Bureau of the Census]
  - 71% of pregnant teenagers lack a father. [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services press release, Friday, March 26, 1999]
  - 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes. [US D.H.H.S., Bureau of the Census]
  - 85% of children who exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes. [Center for Disease Control]
  - 71% of high school dropouts come from fatherless homes. [National Principals Association Report on the State of High Schools]
  - 85% of youths in prisons grew up in a fatherless home. [Fulton County Georgia jail populations, Texas Department of Corrections, 1992]
  - Fatherless boys and girls are: twice as likely to drop out of high school; twice as likely to end up in jail; four times more likely to need help for emotional or behavioral problems. [US D.H.H.S. news release, March 26, 1999]
- **I think you would agree that these are some staggering figures. BUT, even in the church if we are not careful, we too can be a victim in this battle.**
  - Tragically, even when the families are intact, Fathers are still missing from the home & are failing to do the job God intended them to do.
  - One of the things that Preacher Earl taught me early on is this. The ministry is extremely important, the families in the ministry are under your watch, the demands of the ministry at times is overwhelming, but you can't sacrifice your own family to fulfill the work of the ministry.
  - We have some Moms & Dads who are in church today, on fire for God, trying to do the right thing, working hard to earn a living for their families, and yet they are losing their children.
    - Research indicates that 70% of teens who are involved in a church youth group will stop attending church within two years of their high school graduation.
  - What's happening? Even with the best of intentions, where are we missing the mark?
- **We could spend hours giving reason for why we think our children are going astray.**
  - Overwhelming influence of sin in society.
  - Peer pressure.
  - Access to sin.
- **But instead of coming up with reasons, I want to point to the thing that can make a difference in each of our homes today. It's getting back to giving our children what they really need.**
  - You see our society believes (and it has even crept into the local church) that we need to give our children the very best & we need to satisfy their needs.
  - And so we do this through ...
    - Buying them designer clothes,
    - Buying them cars,
    - Throwing money at every event & sport they want to be a part of,
    - And to be honest, we kill ourselves working overtime to see that they get the same things that others kids get b/c we as parents don't want them to be different.

- But while we are working ourselves to exhaustion & sacrificing our credit lines in the process, if we have not given them Jesus, we have failed them miserably, b/c at the end of the day, Jesus is the only one that will keep them grounded, sustain them through life, keep them anchored through the storms of life, and He is the ONLY One that will last!
- So today, Dad's & Mom's, I want to encourage you to give your kids the very best ... give them Jesus.

➤ **READ Deuteronomy 32:45-47**

- **In the later part of this book, we find Moses, the man of God, addressing Israel, the people of God, assembled on the plains of Moab after forty years of wandering in the desert. This would be Moses' final official address to the people he had led out of bondage in Egypt, since he was about to die. The people were about to cross the Jordan River and take possession of the Promised Land, the inheritance God had sworn on oath to give to Abraham and his descendants forever.**
- **They had been in this same position forty years before. But because of the sin of the people, and especially of the men (fathers) who had led them, they had had to wander those forty years until that entire generation of fighting men had died out. Because their fathers had not truly loved God they had refused to trust Him and had disobeyed His commands. And so they died, every one of them, except Joshua and Caleb.**
- **At this important moment, Israel's greatest leader chose to give them a precious gift—the gift of words. Not just any words, but living words, the words of the living God.**
- **Earlier on in Deuteronomy 6, Moses was specifically charging fathers with the responsibility to train their sons to obey the law of God.**
  - Mom's, listen, we love you & you play an important part in each of our families. But the Hebrew text of Deuteronomy 6 puts an emphasis on sons, and the patriarchal structure of the whole book puts an emphasis on fathers.
  - The emphasis on sons is, I believe, for the purpose of raising up future godly fathers who will themselves continue to teach this covenant to their families for the entire history of Israel. Thus, the father-son relationship is highlighted in Deuteronomy 6 specifically because godly leadership had proven to be so vital.
- **So what specifically can we do to change the tide so to speak & rescue our families?**
  - You've got this external world coming at them, you've got this internal corruption being allowed to run its course, and now they have collided leaving some tragic consequences.
  - And what is your job?

**1. Teach Them Jesus**

- Your job is to teach your children the law of God and lead them to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.
  - For all practical purposes, our families Dads are our mission field. You can't have a passion for others if you first don't seek out your own family, right?
  - Now I know that many parents feel like they made some big mistakes or parented in a wrong fashion & for that their children have gone astray.
  - Yet, it may not be so much what you do to your children that makes them go astray as it is what you don't do. Let me explain.
    - As early as you can, your children need to start hearing about Jesus.
      - How He loves them,
      - How He died for them,
      - Why He died for them, specifically their sins,
      - That there are consequences for our sin. (Somebody has to pay when we sin)
      - And then continually as they are growing up, point them to Christ. Is that not exactly what Moses said earlier on in Deuteronomy 6?
  - Our children need to be evangelized with the truth of sin, the truth of death, and the truth of a place called hell.
    - It does not bother me in the least for my children to sit here in the sanctuary & hear me preach about the consequences of sin & the fact of a place called hell.

- “Well Preacher, that may scare them.” I hope it does. I want it to scare them right into the arms of Jesus b/c He has already defeated hell for them & paid the price the you & I nor anyone else could ever pay.
- Jonathan Edwards said that whenever he preached to children, he liked to preach on hell because he said, quote: "It is easier to terrify a child than an adult by setting before it dreadful things."
- Look at Deut. 6:6-7 – “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”
- In other words, you just constantly are teaching them the truth about God and about judgment and about grace and forgiveness and salvation...when you stand up, sit down, lie down, walk in the way, teach them about Jesus.

## 2. Live What You Teach

### - Actions Speak Loudest

#### a. We ought to teach our children to obey God by following our lead.

- i. Over in Joshua 24, Joshua reminds the people of all that God has brought them through and b/c of these things it ought to compel them to want to obey God.
  - 1. The truth of the matter is, they should obey God just b/c of who He is.
  - 2. But Joshua goes on to say that if you need a reason to obey God, then obey Him b/c of His blessings on your life.
- ii. We could go for quite some time on this point here, but let me just say we need to not only teach our children to obey God, but we as Fathers need to set an example for them by obeying God in our daily walk with Him.
  - 1. We ought to obey God b/c He commands us to.
  - 2. We ought to obey God b/c of fear of disappointing Him.
  - 3. We ought to obey God simply b/c we want to please Him.
  - 4. But if none of these will work, we ought to obey God b/c of all that He has done for us.
    - a. Your family
    - b. Possessions
    - c. Job
    - d. Friends
    - e. Most of all, salvation

#### b. We ought to teach our children to follow God’s Word like we do.

- i. Joshua here tells them to follow the Lord in sincerity and truth, in other words, we ought to follow the direction that God has given us in His Word with all of our hearts.
- ii. Some of the greatest advice that we as Fathers can take for ourselves and give to our children is
  - 1. to follow God’s Word for their life, not man’s opinions, not their own desires, but to follow after God and Him alone.
  - 2. and when you follow after God, do it with all of your heart and soul. Be faithful unto Him.

### ➤ **Evil is present all around. The world is influencing our young people & our families away from the truths of God’s Word. This is where Fathers must step in & stand their ground. And our foundation is established upon the truths of God’s Word that will never fade away.**

- Fathers, Grand-Fathers, for many of you your children have grown up, started a family of their own, and perhaps you think your work is complete.
- I urge you today, continue to stay the course. Continue to point your children & the youth of this church to the cross. We need your influence & your example as we spread Jesus.