

FAITHFUL FATHERS ARE #1 DADS

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INTRODUCTION: (SCRIPTURE READING - PROVERBS 23:22-26)

- A. Fathers who strive to do what is right should be valued, praised, and even celebrated. They play an irreplaceable role in our society, in our families, and in our churches!**
1. Today, many fathers will be given hats, shirts, ties, and coffee mugs with the words, "Number One Dad" inscribed on them → But let's be honest, being a number one dad in today's world is tough!
 - a. The days of the great tv shows about "Super Dads" seem to have slipped into oblivion
 - 1) Father Knows Best - He was always shown wearing a coat & shirt & necktie, even at home. His wife baked cakes & cookies, & kept the house spotlessly clean. Whenever the children had problems, she always told them, "Wait until Dad comes home & he'll have the solution." And he always did. He always spoke with great wisdom and it he always knew just what to tell his family to do.
 - 2) Andy Taylor on The Andy Griffith Show – He never panics when faced with an incredible dilemma. He always has time to be the perfect father, even while basically running a town. He speaks great words of wisdom & cleverly finds ways out of every situation. He doesn't lose his cool or treat others wrongly
 - 3) Ward Cleaver (Leave It To Beaver) – He had a patient, but effective style of parenting. His oldest son seemed to stay out of trouble, unless it came while helping out the younger son, Beaver, who always found trouble. Ward was a businessman but was always present as a father and gave great wisdom
 - b. It just doesn't seem like these ideas are reality anymore... perhaps they never really were
 - c. With today's demanding careers, the financial strain families have to endure, kids who seem to be going in a million different directions at once, & all of the things that are demanding our time and messing with our priorities... It's hard to be that #1 dad!
 2. Fathers have a difficult task as they seek to provide materially for family, keep prioritized and balanced, & lead their home spiritually! Such fathers deserve praise! (**Prov 17:6; Eph 6:2**)
- B. Let's look at the lives of two fathers who lived long before these shows, but their example far surpasses them because they were fathers of faith! You see, a faithful father is the real number one dad!**

LESSONS FROM TWO GREAT FATHERS OF FAITH:

- A. Abraham Is An Example Of A Father Who Made His Home A Place Of Faith:**
1. Abraham left a legacy of faith for his children to follow – Not a perfect, but a consistent and unmistakable pattern of faithful living throughout his life! (**Hebrews 11:8-16**)
 - a. Abraham was a man, like the others of Hebrews 11, who was characterized by faith... His faith was his motivation, the foundation of his choices, and the focus of his whole life
 - b. Notice verse 9 → By faith he lived in tents WITH his son Isaac! Isaac grew up in the home of a nomad! He grew up in a home where it was clear that this world was not home!
 2. Abraham left an example for his children showing God and His will must come before anything else in their lives... Even when it would come at a great cost! (**Genesis 22:1-3, 7-10**)
 - a. Isaac may have been the very thing Abraham treasured most on earth... As God instructs Abraham to sacrifice Isaac see how God emphasizes how much Isaac means to him
 - b. This is the son God's promises were tied up in – Abraham sacrificed so much in obeying God and to receive God's promises. Now what would happen to those promises?

- c. We know Isaac was old enough to carry the wood for his own sacrifice, so I am sure Isaac remembered this day for the rest of his life... Left an indelible impression in his mind!
- d. What a lesson Abraham taught his son that day – God comes before EVERYTHING else... no matter the consequences and no matter the cost you must always do what's right
- 3. One day God praised Abraham for the spiritual guidance he provided for his family (**Gen 18:17-19**)
- 4. Fathers who are bringing their children up in the nurture & admonition of the Lord, like Abraham, deserve great honor & respect! You are a rare breed! (**Ephesians 6:4**)
 - a. In today's world it takes a lot of courage to be a father who is working to instill true faith in the hearts of their family → They face a host of challenges, obstacles, & distractions
 - b. If you are a father, especially with children at home, are you showing your children in your speech, values, and priorities that this world is not their home?
 - c. Are you teaching your children that God's will must be submitted to & His laws obeyed regardless of the cost? This takes courage... It's so much easier to compromise!

B. Job Is An Example Of A Father Who Keeps Spiritual Balance & Focus In His Family:

- 1. When we do lessons on fatherhood we typically look at God's instructions for Fathers in how to raise their children, so most lessons are designed for fathers with children still at home.
 - a. This is very important, but what is a father to do once his children have left the home, possibly become married, and started a life of their own? Is his job totally done?
 - b. As we consider the example of Job as a father we see the great role a father continues to play in the life of his family, even after his children have grown and left the home!
 - c. His children seem to be on their own, but he's still a major part of their lives (**Job 1:4, 18**)
- 2. Job was a father who set a wonderful example of morality and godliness for his family (**Job 1:1**)
 - a. This is one of the greatest commendations from God in the entire Bible! Job is so godly that God points him out to Satan as an example of real righteousness! (**Job 1:8**)
 - b. He is called blameless and upright → He who lived a consistently moral life, not perfectly, but consistently. When he erred, he would have corrected it. His faith and character were authentic. He valued honesty & straightforwardness. He stood by his integrity
 - c. He is said to be one who feared God → He held God in the highest place with regards to respect and reverence. He would've sought to do whatever he knew pleased God!
 - d. He shunned evil → He took sin seriously! Job was active in keeping sin out of his life & away from his family. He wanted nothing to do wicked things! He kept it far away!
- 3. Job was a father who was able to keep his life prioritized and grounded, even though he was experiencing great financial success (**Job 1:3**)
 - a. Think about all Job had to keep up with – All these animals, his houses, his family, his servants, as well as the common affairs of life... He would've been a busy man!
 - b. But he seems to have kept great balance and perspective! He didn't let his wealth or his busy schedule keep him from God, from worship, or from his family... This is tough!
 - c. Reading between the lines here, I feel we can safely say that Job's family is apparently a very close-knit family because of the way they continue to get together (**Job 1:4, 18**)
 - 1) Sometimes when children grow up they move off & have little contact with each other... Sometimes this shows the family wasn't close knit as they grew up
 - 2) But here's Job's sons, having started homes of their own, inviting their sisters over regularly. It seems they're just hanging out and having a good 'ole time!

- 3) Usually when this type of relationship exists in adulthood it's the result of a great family atmosphere they had growing up – Even though Job was no doubt a busy man with many concerns, he took time for his family & built this home!
4. His kids seem to be grown, but Job continues shows concern for their spiritual welfare: **(Job 1:5)**
- a. I don't think we have to assume that these "feasts" were necessarily sinful in nature... It would seem they are given here at the beginning of this book as a sign of prosperity
 - b. Job is faithfully concerned for their souls – He does know for sure that they've sinned at all, he just wants to be doubly sure that their relationship with God is correct!
 - c. This was something Job did regularly – Worship & sacrifice was part of their daily lives!
 - d. Job is aware of the spiritual dangers in his children's lives... Even though his children seem to be grown he's still taking an consistent & active role in their spiritual welfare
5. Maybe you are a father with an empty nest – Your role in their life is still powerful and you can still be influencing your children to greater faith! **(Prov 4:1-4, 10)**
- a. Remember that the words you spoke to your children and the example you set for them while they were in your home is still there... They may try to forget, but they're not
 - b. Even when they aren't home it's still important that they see you faithfully serving God...
 - c. Maybe your children aren't faithful to the Lord or maybe they are simply making decisions that you know will harm their spiritual welfare. Don't give up trying to influence them to be faithful – Your role is different now, but you can still help guide them!