

HONOR YOUR FATHERS

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INTRODUCTION:

- A. Today is the day our society sets apart as Father's Day... A day to honor & celebrate our fathers. While it is a secular holiday, the principle behind it is very Biblical! (See **Mal 1:16; Eph 6:2; Prov 30:17**)
- B. Our fathers are worthy of our respect and honor because of the role God has given to them. But when our fathers are godly and faithful men, they are deserving of even more honor and respect!

WE SHOULD ALWAYS HONOR OUR FATHERS BECAUSE OF THE POSITION THEY HOLD, BUT FATHERS ARE ESPECIALLY WORTHY OF OUR HONOR AND PRAISE WHEN THEY...

A. Have Left Or Are Leaving Behind A Legacy Of Wisdom In Their Children:

- 1. Fathers are often remembered by their children according to the words which they spoke:
 - a. Sons often remember their father's words as they taught them to be a man – To be a responsible person, to be strong, to take a stand, to work hard, and to be productive
 - b. Daughters may remember their fathers teaching them to be a respectable woman, to get a good education, to do good for others, to take care of their families, and to love
 - c. I believe most fathers really want to teach their kids things that count, principles that will make the lives of their kids better than their own, but when many fathers seek to instill wisdom in their children their teaching lacks a true spiritual perspective
- 2. When Solomon sought to leave something for his son, he sought to leave with him a legacy of wisdom in the fear of the Lord (**Proverbs 1:1-4, 7-9**)
 - a. He could have left a lot of things to his son, but through the book of Proverbs the thing that endured the most were his words about how to live a life of pleasing the Lord
 - b. Solomon was concerned about giving instruction and wisdom to the simple and the youth... His son was inexperienced in life. These words were to keep him from making the mistakes life experience would prevent or give him insight it'd provide
 - c. His son would have no doubt about what his father believed – Fearing God is not only the most important thing in life... It is the foundation of everything you do and are in life!
- 3. We certainly do not have time to examine all of the things Solomon left behind in his son, but let's consider some of the practical godly wisdom Solomon wanted his son to receive:
 - a. To keep his heart with all diligence since from it spring the issues of life (**4:23-27**)
 - b. To stay far away from adultery & only fulfill his desires with the wife of his youth (**5, 7**)
 - c. To avoid debt, to work hard to pay off anything you owe, to not be slothful (**6:1-5; 22:7**)
 - d. To speak wisely – Avoid anger, gossip, lies, etc, and speak words that are good (**18:21**)
 - e. So much of the ruin and misery people suffer in this life is avoidable, if only they would listen to & apply the instructions Solomon gave to his son... They're timeless truths!
- 4. Fathers who instill godly and faithful wisdom in their children leave a lasting legacy which will guide them even when they are old, throughout all the days of their lives! (**Prov 22:6**)
 - a. This can be encouraging for some for whom fathers day can be quite painful:
 - 1) If you have a child who is not doing right – You have taught them the ways they should go, they know what is right, so your teaching can still guide them back
 - 2) If you have a father who isn't a Christian – If they gave you wisdom and instruction that helped you find the truth and be a person of faith, be thankful for that!

- b. Some fall into emphasizing a good education or being skilled at sports above spiritual wisdom and instructions... We should be thankful for godly fathers who stay focused!
- c. Do you want to honor your father? Then let his teachings about God guide your life and this would be the greatest father's day present you could ever offer to him!

B. Have Been Or Are Being A Spiritual Leader In Their Home

1. In a world of darkness where dysfunctional homes seem to be becoming the norm, we need to be especially thankful for godly men who have been determined to shine as lights! **(Philippians 2:15)**
 - a. Many homes today are described as "broken homes," too many fathers have gone a.w.o.l. on their children, other fathers are simply neglectful, and those of the world are not giving their families what they need most... strong spiritual leadership!
 - b. In complete contrast to this are the godly and faithful fathers – Men who seek first the kingdom of God, love the Lord, lead their homes, & help their family go to Heaven!
 - c. We have such godly and faithful fathers this in our midst today and there are many who have been a part of this church who have gone on to be with the Lord!
2. There is a rather obscure example in the Bible of a father who was a great spiritual leader... This man's name is Jonadab (Jehonadab) and he was the father of the Rechabites **(Jeremiah 35:18)**
 - a. Remember him? A man named Jehu led a revolt against the descendents of Ahab and Jezebaal. In I Kings 10, this Jonadab, son of Rechab, meets Jehu & is asked whose side he is on. He says, "Just watch me" and gets into Jehu's chariot. They go into Samaria, the capitol of Israel, and slaughter the remaining 70 sons of Ahab, as well as all the worshippers in the temple of Baal, and destroyed the temple of Baal itself!
 - b. What a man of faith, courage, and conviction! When his descendents remembered him, they could remember the great stand he took for the Lord and the Lord's cause!
 - c. It goes on... At some point he had given his descendents some peculiar instructions: Don't drink wine, live in tents, don't plant fields or vineyards. Why say this? They were to be warriors for the Lord and obeying this would keep free from material & physical entanglements that would prevent them from fulfilling the Lord's purpose for them!
 - d. When Jeremiah writes these things, Jonadab's descendents are still consistently obeying his instructions... They are one of the very few bright spots in Jeremiah's prophecies!
3. Paul used the work of mothers and fathers to describe his ministry among the Thessalonians... In this we see four characteristics of strong spiritual leadership in fathers: **(I Thess 2:7-12)**
 - a. A father's spiritual leadership involves expressing genuine love – This love isn't hypocritical or selfish... It is unconditional and yet it has expectations... It is motivational **(vs. 8)**
 - b. A father's spiritual leadership involves an unselfish diligence – He pours out himself for his family, sacrifices, works hard to provide physically, emotionally, & spiritually **(vs. 8-9)**
 - c. A father's spiritual leadership involves genuine spirituality – He is transparent, no hidden secret life, his example leads them closer to God, they see his faith in action **(vs. 10)**
 - d. His spiritual leadership involves Edifying & Motivating – At times he's gentle & at times he's bold, but at all times he is seeking to bring his children to know the Lord! **(vs. 12)**
4. We ought to be thankful for Godly and faithful fathers who understand what is most important in life – Raising their children to know and love the Lord! **(Col 3:21; Eph 6:1-4)**

C. Have Set Or Are Setting A Solid Example In Their Home For Their Children To Follow

1. It is vital for fathers to instill in their children a knowledge of God's word and God's ways; however those words may fall upon deaf ears if they are not accompanied by example **(2 Thess 3:7-10)**
 - a. Experts on teaching will tell you that often auditory learning is not enough... there needs to be visual learning as well... Part of this example... Seeing what is taught in action.
 - b. Just like with evangelism, if fathers want their words to be viable, they must first be visible! When we don't live what we teach, our actions speak louder than our words!
 - c. Along the journey of fatherhood fathers learn so much from their children & are reminded of the value of their own example **(Poem: "Two Prayers" from book "Two Men")**
2. As Amos spoke of the problem of unfaithfulness within the nation of Judah, he traced it back to unfaithful way their fathers before them had walked **(Amos 2:4)**
3. Consider some specific areas where fathers should leave behind an example to their children... If we can look back and see these things in our fathers, we should certainly be thankful for them!
 - a. An example of a spiritual man – Children need to see their fathers praying, studying God's word, talking about the Lord, becoming like Christ, an drawing near to God
 - b. An example of a family man – Children need to see their fathers loving their mother as Christ loved the church, providing for the family, spending time together as a family
 - c. An example of a church man – Children need to see their fathers faithful to their local church, taking an active role in whatever ways they can, that it matters to them
 - d. An example of a focused man – Children need to see their fathers seeking the kingdom of God first, making sacrifices to serve the Lord, not letting physical things interfere
4. This point presents a great challenge to all fathers – Are you leaving behind an example of faithfulness, love, hope, and morality for your children to follow? **(Philippians 3:17; I Peter 3:21)**
 - a. If you have been a father for any number of years you know good and well that your children imitate you – for good or evil. Does this comfort you or frighten you?
 - b. **Illustration:** Poem called "Walk A Little Plainer Daddy" – This poem doesn't have to be a source of regret, but a confirmation of the good work fathers have done

I am personally impressed by the spiritual leadership I see in some of our fathers here. Many of you have children who are out on their own and have their own families. Yet you still are trying to lead them in the way of the Lord through your own example, admonitions, and encouragement.

Walk a little plainer, Daddy,
Said a little boy so frail.
I'm following in your footsteps,
And I don't want to fail.
Sometimes your steps are very plain,
Sometimes they are hard to see,
So walk a little plainer, Daddy,
For you are leading me.

I know that once you walked this way
Many years ago,
And what you did along the way,
I'd really like to know.
For sometimes when I am tempted,
I don't know what to do.
So walk a little plainer, Daddy,
For I must follow you.

Someday when I'm grown up,
You are like I want to be.
Then I will have a little boy,
Who will want to follow me.
And I would want to lead him right,
And help him to be true.
So walk a little plainer, Daddy.
For we must follow you.

Author Unknown

Two Prayers

(From "Two Men" by Bill Hall)

Last night my little boy
Confessed to me
Some childish wrong;
And kneeling at my knee
He prayed with tears;
"Dear God, make me a man
Like Daddy – wise and strong;
I know you can."
Then while he slept
I knelt beside his bed,
Confessed my sins,
And prayed with bowed head;
"O God, make me a child,
Like my child here –
Pure, guileless
Trusting thee with faith sincere."
- Author Unknown