

IN PRAISE OF GODLY FATHERS

2007 Men's Camp Message

When you see a movie or watch a TV program, or for that matter, in your total life experience, how would you say fathers, and fatherhood, are portrayed?

Many of you are probably too young to remember the 50's TV show "Father Knows Best", but in that great old show dad was never portrayed as a buffoon. He was never like the Raymond of "Everybody Loves Raymond", which should really be titled "Everybody Knows Raymond's an Moron," **nor** was he like any of the other absent minded simpletons we see dads portrayed as today.

So why do you think our culture seems hell bent on destroying the institution of fatherhood? It seems that the news media is forever placing the blame on everything that is wrong in American society on the institution of fatherhood. Every pervert, nut, crazy, and crackpot is supposedly that way because they were beaten, abused and excessively disciplined by a sick, cruel, overly religious zealot of a father. If you look at television, newspapers, and movies all fathers are unloving, cold, distant louts who don't care about their wives or children, but only about their own carnal pleasures.

Some years ago Merv griffin was interviewing Lucille Ball and oddly enough, he asked her a very pointed question. **"Lucille, you've lived a long time on this earth and you are a wise person. What's happened to our country? What's wrong with our children? Why are our families falling apart? What's missing?"**

Lucy's startling yet matter-of-fact reply came quickly. **"Papa's missing,"** she said. **"Things are falling apart because Papa's gone. If Papa were here, he would fix it."**

Lucille Ball was far better known for her comic performances than for her social insights. But she was right. Because many of the family problems that plague American culture have, at their root, dysfunctional fathers.

Men, the soul of our country is in crisis in large part because American men have—from ignorance and for various and sometimes even subconscious reasons—abandoned their God-given role of fatherhood. They have discarded the notion of being responsible for the physical and spiritual well-being of those around them.

American men have walked out on their God-given responsibility for moral and spiritual leadership in the homes, schools, and Sunday schools of our country. The groundwork for the 21st-century fatherless home has been set. By the end of the 19th century for the first time it was socially and morally acceptable for men not to be involved with their families. We have become a nation of phantom fathers.

But brothers, I'm here to state categorically that this is not part of God's economy. We have available to us a perfect set of directions, given to us by God, and it fills the pages between Genesis and Maps that we call the Bible.

Men, everything I'm going to say this morning presupposes that you and I are **NOT** phantom fathers – that we are present in every sense in this picture. What follows is meant as a challenge to reach for greater heights and not an indictment of all that we are not. We are all a work in progress. In 1 Timothy 1:15 Paul, speaking to Timothy says “**Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.**” And then on the other hand says to him “**But you, O man of God . . .**” The idea here is that these are the two sides of each of us. We may not be what we could be, and we may not be what we will be, but thank God we're not what we used to be. With that said, let's talk about some Biblical guidelines for the Godly father, while recognizing we all come up short at times.

I. Godly Fathers – Remember That You Should Be The Right **Example Before Your Children.**

A. It's been well said that leadership is **influence. Today we need fathers who will understand and follow the Biblical commands to be careful about their **influence**.**

1. Matthew 5:13 **“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.**

2. 1 Timothy 4:12 “Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers- [*especially your children*] -in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”

B. Our examples **as fathers speak louder than words.**

1. Do we tell our children that the church is the most important thing in the world and act like it is just a sideline for us?

2. Do we tell our children not to drink, smoke, or take drugs, and then use them ourselves?

3. Are we preaching one thing and living another?

4. In other words do we go beyond having faults and enter the realm of hypocrisy?

II. Godly Fathers - Remember That You Are The **Leader In The Home.**

A. Many men have abandoned their God-ordained role as **head of the home.**

1. Some have not assumed this role because they don't want the responsibilities, thereby forcing it on their wife.

2. While others have even yielded it to their children, turning the Biblical model upside down.

3. Some men sincerely want to exercise this God given authority and have faced rebellion from both mother and child.

B. What does the Bible say concerning the father's role?

1. The father is to lead the family in its participation in the community of faith. This includes things as basic as showing up on Sundays as well as Bible study, devotional time, prayer and other spiritual activities. These spiritual activities are **not** "women's work."

Ephesians 6:4 **“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”**

Proverbs 22:6 – **“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”**

3. We should be like Abraham.

a. Genesis 18:19 – **“For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”**

III. Godly Fathers – Must Be The Right Kind Of Man.

What do I mean by that?

A. Some fathers pride themselves in the "tough guy" image.

1. This is the guy that takes delight in beating up the kids and/or wife just to show them who's the boss.

2. This is the type of "man" who likes to go out with the "boys" and drink and chase women, but will leave his wife and children to fend for themselves.

3. This is the man who can never bring himself to tell his wife and kids "I love you." He thinks that's for weaklings.

B. But the Bible gives us a different image of the godly father.

Here are 4 Biblical images.

1. God's man will practice **love** in the home.

a. 1 Corinthians 13:13 – **“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love**

2. The godly man will **rejoice** in his children.

a. Psalms 127:3-5 “**Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him.** Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.”

3. Godly men will understand that we are **not a sissy** because we shed a tear.

a. In John 11:35 we see that “**Jesus wept.**” *(shortest verse for a reason?)*

4. Godly men will understand that there is no virtue in passion and lust.

a. He will understand that there is a difference between **meekness** and **weakness**.

b. Matthew 11:28-30 “**Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.**”

IV. Godly Fathers – Must Remain Morally Pure In A Garbage Can Society.

A. The godly father understands that he sets the pace in the type of language used in the home.

1. He seeks to practice pure speech.

2. Ephesians 4:29 – “**Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.**”

3. Colossians 4:6 – “**Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.**”

B. He avoids anything that would pollute the home.

1. Overindulgence in alcoholic beverages

2. Sexually oriented books, magazines, or tapes.

3. Questionable television programs.

a. Psalm 101:3 says – **I will set before my eyes no vile thing.**

4. We cannot feed at the garbage trough of the world six days a week and think that we can honestly sing “Purer in heart O God, help me to be” and have God miraculously remove six days of garbage.

Let me give you my 456. That is, 4 priorities, 5 Duties, and 6 examples.

4 priorities for a successful Christian father:

(1) He must evangelize his own children.

(2) He must provide spiritual leadership for the family. Rules without relationship result

in rebellion.

(3) He must assure the **quality** of his family's physical, academic and spiritual environment. This involves right choices in the family's social, academic and religious lives... namely, choosing spiritual friends, attending good schools and worshipping and serving God exclusively in Bible-believing Christ-exalting churches.

(4) He assumes **responsibility** for his family's financial needs and physical safety. This does not mean the wife cannot work and contribute financially. However, he must be the fountain head.

5 Duties of a successful Christian father:

(1) He must **openly and obviously** love his children's mother.

(2) He must have a **personal and intimate** relationship with his children.

(3) He must build **self worth** in his children.

(4) He must encourage vision, hope and purity. He must be **verbal and positive**.

(5) He must guarantee **perpetual endowment**. His children must believe he will never desert them or their mother.

6 ultimate examples of ideal fatherhood:

(1) The Heavenly Father **cares for** His children. I Peter 5:7 “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

(2) He **responds** to the needs of His children. Philippians 4:19 “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

(3) He **forgives** His children. 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

(4) He **disciplines** His children. Proverbs 3:11-12 “My son, do not despise the LORD’S discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.”

(5) He **comforts** His children. Isaiah 49:13 “Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.”

(6) He **listens** to His children. I John 5:14-15 “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.”

Let’s thank God for every godly father. They’re not perfect men, but they are sincerely seeking to lead their children in the direction of heaven. May their tribe increase.