

A Godly Father's Charge

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Date: 23 March 2014

Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[0 : 00] Let me at the beginning here, first of all, just thank the Massaro small group for their willingness to do that memory work. We have been blessed in our series through the book of Ephesians! with one person and group after another reciting various chapters of the book of Ephesians. It's been our blessing, hasn't it? The wide diversity of individuals that have been willing to kind of step up and do that very difficult, hard thing. I do want you to know that we are looking for one more person, couple, group, family, whatever, to tackle Ephesians chapter 4. That is the only one remaining in the current iteration, and I am...and you have Ephesians 4. Is it three that I'm looking for? Well, it's my first mistake of the day. Okay. I'll try it this way. I need one other person, family, etc., to volunteer to do whatever chapter I haven't decided needs to be done. Yes! But thank you, Tom. It has been a great blessing, and so I need one other person, group, etc., to tackle that.

Second thing, we are taking care of some preliminaries. This is...I'm going to preach this morning from Ephesians chapter 6 verse 4, which is God's explicit instruction to those who are fathers that says, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. That being said, from the text, this book is an excellent, excellent, excellent book. You want the title? What every man wishes his father had told him by Byron Forrest Yon. What every man wishes his father had told him by Byron Forrest Yon. Okay? And I would encourage you strongly to get the copy and read it and take it to heart. This copy belongs to Tim Bauer, and I want to be sure that you get it right there. Yeah. Or what every woman wishes her mother? Father. Okay. Have you started on that one yet? I have a copy of that one as well, but I will tell you, listen, what's it say in Ecclesiastes of the making of books there is no end? Something like that? This is a good book, and it's a good book with broad application. You know, there are some times that I recommend in my earlier life when I was younger, I used to recommend some books that most everybody else said, yeah, I'm glad you're a person. I'm glad you're a good book. I'm glad you're a good book. I'm glad you're a good book.

You know, but this is an excellent book. You'll be blessed by it. Now, take your Bibles and open in that book. And go to Ephesians chapter 6 verse 4.

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Let's pray.

[4 : 07] Father God, this morning as we take the Word in hand, we're reminded that that your Word is a lamp and a light, that your Word is settled in the heavens, that your Word is the express declaration of your purpose and your will, and that it is the means whereby your children may receive abundant blessings. We also understand, Lord, that the comprehension and apprehension, the process of taking the Word and letting it sink into our life and then letting it produce behavior that brings glory to Christ is not something that happens just because we decide we're going to think about it for a while, but it happens because of the work of the Spirit of God. Now, we want to be yielded to you. We recognize that you have things to say that are supremely important, and we need to hear it.

And I pray, Father, this morning that as the Word is being preached, that your Spirit would drive it firmly home in the hearts of all of those who are men and fathers today.

And those that are sitting here, perhaps, that do not know Christ, even as they listen to the wisdom that you have for fathers, practical as it is, that your Spirit would be drawing them to recognize the desperate condition of their soul, and they would call out upon the name of the Lord Jesus and be saved.

And we ask this in Jesus' name and for His glory. Amen. Amen. It's kind of interesting that I would begin by recommending a book.

And it's a good book, but I want to tell you that that book is nothing compared to this one. And this book gives us 20 short words that are absolutely at the heart of what it takes to be a godly father. [6:20] You get these 20 words right, you don't need forest yawn. Now, am I saying that you wouldn't benefit?

In the multitude of counselors, there is safety, as the Proverbs recite. There is benefit in hearing what God is doing in other people's lives. But let me make this clear. Get these 20 first and let them be etched upon your heart.

They are critical. They're essential. They're foundational. And I want you to understand this morning that God is speaking explicitly and pointedly to every one of you who are fathers here today. Every one of you. So let me begin by making the point as we look at the passage. Dad, God's talking to you. He's talking to you.

And I want you to understand, as I have often said, that really the heart of preaching is making God's Word clear and putting people on the spot of saying yes or no to God. At the end, when you walk out of here, one of the things that I trust has taken place is that the Spirit of God has taken the Word of God and He's driven it clearly into the hearts of you who are men and you are saying, yes, God, by your power and through the work of the Spirit of God, I will do these things.

[7:36] And when it's settled and it's done and my day comes to an end and my life comes to a conclusion, I want it to be said I did not do the things I shouldn't and I, by your Spirit, did what I've been called to do.

So, in one sense, if I am faithful to my calling, as you who are fathers are driving home, your interested wife could kind of touch your shoulder or whatever and say, honey, so what are you going to do?

And what you ought to say, as a man who has been convicted by the Spirit of God and prompted by the clarity of the Word of God, you say, hey, I got it, I got it, I am not going to provoke and I will bring my children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

And from the back seat, some of you kids, go ahead, you can say, hey, Daddy, what are you going to do? And Dad should say, I'm glad you asked.

I want you to know I was listening, I even was taking notes, and I'm not going to provoke. And I'm going to bring you up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. A little note to sell for you who are women, ladies in particular, probably before you ask him that question, you probably ought to kiss him on the lips and blow in his ear and run your fingers through his hair and say, honey, by the way, Pastor coached me.

[9:02] I wouldn't be doing this otherwise, right? But, hey, what are you going to do? I mean, you know, hey, guys, get to it. And so if she misses the boat and she misses it, get her the CD, you know, make her listen to this and say, hey, get with me, help me here.

Now let's get to the point. What we find here in this passage in Ephesians 6, verse 4, is God giving fathers an explicit command.

And words are important. And the word that is used here in verse 4 is different than the one that is used in verse 1. I want you to look back just for a moment. It says, children, obey your what?

Parents. Parents. Now parents generally, what we're talking about when we talk about parents? We're talking about a daddy and a mommy. We're talking about both parties in this process. But in this case, the Scriptures explicitly speak to fathers.

And I want you to understand that while mothers play a very important role in the lives of children, she is not the one that God holds responsible first. She is not the one that God looks to first.

[10:15] The first responsibility for what happens in the lives of children in a Christian home falls on the Father.

By the way, I was thinking earlier this week as I was studying about the process whereby, where Moses, towards the end of his ministry, he recited the law to the nation of Israel.

And one of the things that they would do is he would say, cursed is the man that does blah, blah, blah. And then guess what people would say at the end of that? What would they say?

It was a Baptist amen. Okay? By Baptists. I mean, Baptists are very reserved and hold those in abeyance. You know, it's like we don't say amen very often. But what, do you know what amen means, by the way?

It means what? Right on. That's what it means. Yeah! That's it. And so we're looking at this passage, and I want you to understand that God is speaking, and He's saying, dads, fathers, this is

your responsibility.

[11 : 20] And all the men in the congregation that are fathers said, right on! That's me! I hear it! I got it! It's for me. So to put it bluntly, God says, Christian dad, you're the one who is first responsible for your child's upbringing.

That means that the Christian father cannot be passive, wussy. He is going to be called to account, and he will not be able to say, well, I want you to understand that I was out there banging the door, making it work, and doing my responsibilities.

I will never forget. A number of years ago, I was in a funeral home, and I knew the family moderately well, relatively new.

This was my first ministry, and I went to this calling hours, and here is this dear lady lying in the casket. She was a godly, wonderful woman, and the husband was standing there doing the thing that normally goes along, and he says, I want you to know that my wife was responsible for the spiritual well-being of our home.

Now, what's a pastor supposed to say in a moment like that? I did my best to act like, yeah, right. But I thought to myself later on, let me tell you something.

[12 : 39] At the end of the day, God expects men to be the spiritual leaders in their home, and He expects you, fathers, to be the one who care for the well-being of your home. While there are certain other expectations that fathers are given by God, such as, it says in 1 Timothy that a man that does not provide for his household is what?

Worse than an infidel. God expects a father to be the one that provides for his family. But I want you to understand that in this passage in Ephesians, it is quite evident that Paul the apostle, as he knew what was going on in the church, he recognized we've got a bigger, a more significant problem, a greater challenge to the well-being of the bride of Christ than daddies who aren't showing up and doing their work.

We're concerned about what's happening spiritually. And so he says, fathers, I've got some instruction for you. And so I want you to think about this, dads.

You can write it on your notes. I will give an account for obeying or disobeying a direct order from God. Do you understand that? This is a direct order from God. He is saying to you as a father, here's what I expect.

20 words, not much. So let's look at it particularly. Number one, don't provoke. We're given a negative command first.

[14 : 05] And provocation must have been enough of a problem that Paul recognized that something need be said about it. And in the ancient world, I want you to understand that provocation and cruelty was the norm.

You didn't have the children's services or anything like that to call on neighbors and say, I think so-and-so is being unkind to his children. In fact, in the ancient world, particularly in the Roman world, the father was the absolute final authority.

When a child was born, that child was laid at the father's feet. And if the child picked it up, or if the father picked the child up, that child was adopted or brought into the family and accepted as his own and had the shelter and protection of that dad.

All that a father had to do was not pick that child up. And that child was then taken and placed outside and could be abandoned or left to be turned into a slave or whatever else.

Did you know what the early church did? The early church went into the marketplace and picked up a lot of those babies, and the first orphanages were Christian homes. And in the ancient world, cruelty and unkindness was normal, part of life.

[15 : 20] And so Paul says here, he says, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath. That word provoke means to stir up anger and inner resentment. And in this case, it really is something that flows out of a father's godly behavior and attitude.

Now stop just for a moment. Could the most perfect father in the world have children that grow up angry and resentful? And the answer is yes. God the Father had offspring among whom I am one and you are one, who have had no problem with anger and difficulties associated with it.

And the truth of the matter is, is that a perfect dad could create or have a child that was angry and upset. But Paul is concerned in particular that dads who are Christians, who are spirit-filled, understand that they are not to be contributors to the child's difficulty.

And so mark also that the word here in the text, it says stop provoking. You know what that's saying? Dads were doing it. It was going on. So let me begin by helping you understand in the larger context of what we're looking at.

Christian dads provoke children to anger most often when they're not spirit-filled. Will you not forget that? This passage is really about what spirit-filled living is.

[16:43] And I trust that one of the things you do when you walk out of here is that, you know, dad doesn't say to himself, I'm going to write on the chalkboard a hundred times, do not provoke your children. Do not provoke your children.

No. No. The first thing that you do is say, hey, I need to be spirit-filled. I need to be spirit-filled. I need to be spirit-filled. Because if I'm spirit-filled, I will not provoke my children to wrath.

Let's think here practically about some of the ways that we may provoke children to wrath. Number one, by being an angry and threatening dad.

By being an angry and threatening dad. Let me read a couple passages to you. And some of you sitting here may even know some of these passages from Proverbs. So you may want to mark these down.

For one, Proverbs chapter 15, verse 1 says, a harsh word stirs up anger. Say that slowly. A harsh word stirs up anger. So if you are one of those bellowing, belligerent, angry, stompy, grumpy, you know, kind of attitudinal dads, sooner or later your child will kind of tire of being intimidated by your attitudes, and eventually you're going to raise a child like that.

[17:51] proverbs 15 or 15 1 a harsh word stirs up anger let me have you look at another one proverbs chapter 29 verse 22 a man of wrath stirs up strife and one given to anger causes much transgression isn't that a good verse to memorize let me let me give you the recitation again so you can look it up on your own proverbs 29 verse 22 oh i know that verse i don't need it a man of wrath what stirs up strife and one given to anger causes much transgression so as you are driving home and your wife says what are you going to do and you're going to say i'm not going to provoke i will bring them up you may also later on when the kids have dissipated you may say to your wife if you have the nerve hey honey have you ever seen me be angry it's fair question isn't it ever have you ever seen me go off on the kids so i want to say to you fathers if you are here and and the truth of matter is is that you are one of those moody grumpy loud bangy dads listen to me you may terrorize your children for a period of time but you are building a bomb and the day is coming that it'll go up to your heartache well there's another way that we can provoke our children to wrath and that has that is be by by being passive and not a spiritual leader by being passive and not a spiritual leader now by the way is it easy for a for a dad and a father and a husband to be a spiritual leader and all men in here said what what'd they say it's not very easy it really takes the holy spirit's power because by nature everybody smile so i can say it to you all know that you love me uh hey by nature men are tyrants or cowards would you agree with that and this business of being a godly humble spiritual leader we don't get naturally we need help help help help being passive and not a spiritual leader i think about jacob yes the patriarch jacob you know what kind of dad he was he was not the best model that's one of the reasons why when i read in the scripture and says the god of jacob help you i think yes i need him because i'm jacob by the way jacob remember one of the cases is his daughter diana was raped and he didn't do anything he just kind of sat around well we haven't and his sons came home and guess what they did they took it into hand and solved the problem in a very negative way and it was a mess so dad if you sit around and be a wuss i gotta guarantee you eventually it's not going to work well i think about david when he found out that incest had taken place in his home and he wasn't willing to deal with it eventually absalom railed against him third a dad may provoke his children to wrath by being an absentee it's no secret that part of the rot in israel was found where men had no faithfulness and commitment to their wife just being a sperm donor to various women is not the same as being committed to one woman and staying with her and working with the process of raising godly children it takes a lot of work playing favorites that's another specialty remember joseph by the way what did his brothers dislike about him besides the fact that he had the coat of many colors he was his daddy's favorite and we know that playing favorites is something that will get you in trouble we find it in scripture and so dad if what you want to do is you want to create heartache for your children just go ahead

and play favorites and can i tell you something i was thinking about this this morning um every person's different there will never be a duplicate of any of us i mean god is infinitely creative when it comes to snowflakes and people am i right and so you are who you are and so thinking to yourself

well i really like my son that is you know six nine and can slam dunk he's my money child have you ever heard the phrase money child how many of you know what a money child is a money child is the child that you're hoping will make so much money that he will buy you a house and a car and a hummer and you know money child and so you happen to love on the kid that is you know he is the future doctor in your family and what's the other one well he may be a specialist in digging ditches and you're thinking that's not my kid you know don't play favorites by the way judith and i only had four of them and i can tell you every one of them is radically different there's another way and that is neglecting discipline neglecting discipline i pity the child i really do i pity the child who has been allowed to be sassy and disrespectful to their parents i wish i could tell you that i didn't see that in our congregation but i do on occasion i'm sad when i see parents that let their children go off and nothing happens and how do i know that nothing happens everybody smile everybody look at me so you know i'm talking to you the reason kids don't put their finger in the light socket over and over again is because somehow or another there's something that takes place between action and consequences with light sockets do you understand that in a previous life that means when i was younger i used to be a wallpaper hanger i hung wallpaper and uh one of the things that goes with hanging wallpaper is that occasionally you have to cut around a an outlet you follow an outlet and if you put your razor blade too deep into the outlet get what's guess what happens does anybody else know besides me electricity courses through that wet blade and the wet handle and it gets your attention you know and one of the things that i remember on more than one occasion is saying out loud to myself that was stupid and and i'll tell you there would be there would be days that would go by where i didn't have the same experience now when i see children do the same same same over and over and over i am figuring out that somehow or another the parent who is involved directly with that child is letting them go i gotta tell you you raise an angry child when you don't help them learn that they're not the center of the universe god expects parents to be the ones who deal with misbehavior and discipline their child when they're wrong i think about that passage in first kings where it talks about one of david's sons here's what it says it says his father had never told him no now there's some of you are saying well i'd say i'm no all the time you know how it is no don't do that no don't do no no no you know i i'm not talking about just saying the word i'm saying deal with it right and all god's people said that was really encouraging we got kind of 28 participation on it an amen okay well let's go to the nowhere we're dealing with this disciplining and anger disciplining and anger can repetitious misbehavior cause parents to become angry fathers in particular is there anybody that will rave their hand at me and said i had to deal with anger in my home i had to my anger earlier in my life i have to confess that as a young father my anger got the best of me on occasion later on what i learned was helpful is that when something happened i would say to my my children my sons seemed to be the ones that really tweaked me um i would say to my sons in particular go to your room and pray about this do you know what i was doing well what was i doing i was going to the room the other room i was like oh lord please let me let me be objective here let me think let me pray just uh because being angry doesn't take a specialist do you understand that it just takes listen to me carefully takes a fool a man who cannot control himself is worse than a city without walls and if your children would admit to your anger being part of your parenting style there is a spiritual problem going on in your life and the solution for that is first of all if you're a child of god to humble yourself and confess and forsake it and ask for the spirit of god to help you if you're here and you don't know christ you need jesus because nobody but jesus can change the heart well we understand don't provoke don't provoke don't provoke don't provoke well let's talk about bring them up it says there bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the lord god gives us a positive command and god expects fathers to do this work of bringing them up and i want you to understand that bringing them up involves more than feeding them and seeing to it that they're at the bus stop at the right time the way the spirit of god puts this is that christian fathers are the ones that are primarily responsible for their children's spiritual maturity and progress christian fathers are the ones that have primary responsibility for their child's progress should your wife help of course you should she is your helper that's her her divinely appointed responsibility but at the heart of it you're the one that god expects to be the one who does the work should teachers help yes should a family youth pastor help and the answer is what yes but let me tell you the way we are hardwired in this fellowship is that at the end of the day if there's something going on guess who's going to know about it it's going to be dead it's going to be dead and the one that is principally expected to be the one that works through that challenge is not the the pastor that does the counseling or or the the youth leader that works in the situation or or the teacher or the coach it's the dad that's the one

that's responsible i want you to understand that a christian father is to nurture and admonish discipline is the other word that is used here and and the two words refer to a very robust activity that is demanding and really cannot be really delegated entirely let me give you three illustrations from the bible of how this plays out for one to nurture to discipline and admonish means to live the truth and teach in the flow of life turn over in your bible to one of the critical passages on parenting in the book of deuteronomy go back to deuteronomy chapter 6 we're going to look at it and by the way let me suggest dads if you're sitting here this morning hey listen do christian fathers need to be encouraged and dealt with in this area and what do all of us say yes yes yes one of the things that i would do is encourage you to memorize this passage in ephesians chapter 6 verse 4 20 words you can do it with your eyes closed and then if you want to kind of step up the food chain go to deuteronomy chapter 6 deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 4 through 9 here is moses making a very interesting statement to the nation of israel he says here oh israel the lord our god the lord is one in other words god's talking to you buddy he has something to say you better pay attention verse 6 it says you shall or 5 it says you shall love the lord your god with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might so where is the starting point of being an effective father where is it it's loving god it's having a right heart towards god and loving him by the way if you love him will you be one of these frumpy stumpy guys that's always bellowing and acting like he's a tyrant in his home what's the answer from all of god's people no if you're full of yourself and not full of god you're going to be a little demagogue in your home and a tyrant that temporarily your children will be afraid of but eventually guess what they grow up they leave and they say i've had it with that level of anger deuteronomy says this you love the lord and then you get this word in your heart and then you are to teach them diligently to your children and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk in the way and when you lie down and when you rise up what's it saying listen dad the best way to teach your children is to be living it so that as life plays out you take opportunity to help them understand what life with god looks like so how do you work to nurture and admonish well one you make certain that you are living the truth and that you're teaching it in the flow of life second you take advantage of teachable moments turn over in your bible if you would exodus chapter 12 verse 26 you're in deuteronomy it's just a short jump but back in deuteronomy chapter 12 verse 26 after the uh the passover had been implemented god gives some instruction to fathers here's what it says verse 25 and when you come to the land that the lord will give you as he has promised you shall keep this service in other words when you're where you're going and i get you there and you're having the passover verse 26 and when your children shall say to you what do you mean by this service you shall say it is the sacrifice of the lord's passover do you understand that that teachable moments are going to happen in your home that's the way life is there are there you can sometimes lecture to your blue in the face and it doesn't make a whole lot of a sense but then something happens that kind of opens the window of opportunity and you have an opportunity to step in and say hey you know what here's how this connects and man this is this is important teachable moments take advantage of them third and i'm going to give you a broad survey of the book of proverbs can i tell you that i think proverbs is a very very one more very good book for parenting by the way teach about people teach about relationships and teach about sex can i say that again slowly so you know i said it teach about people teach about relationships and teach about sex song of solomon and proverbs have a great deal to say about sexuality about purity about relationships about marriage god has all kinds of information there in the bible for you as a parent to rely upon and by the way listen to me if you decide that the appropriate time to teach your children about sex is when they're 16 and you give them the keys to the car and you say don't have a mess you're way too late you're way too late because the world has already filled their mind with all kinds of wickedness that has nothing to do with god's purpose you know who invented sex by the way everybody smile at me so you know i'm talking to you god planned it and he meant it for a wonderful wonderful thing and so it's not something that you as a father ought to say to your son the night before his wedding now son you know i've been holding off to talk to you about this but now here's something you need to know that's not it daddy you should be the one who talks in particular to your son about how god made you and he should have a clear understanding of the blessing of sexuality long before can i say this slow long before he begins to pay attention to little girls now do all boys pay attention to little girls at the same pace no so if you're kind of one of those absentee daddies or you're one of those absent daddies that every now and then just has these little solar flares you're missing the boat you need to pay attention to how god made your son and you need to be talking to him about

relationships you need to be talking to him about people you need to be talking to him about sex that's your job it's not your place to be negligent on that area and let the enemy fill your boy or your girl with all kinds of ideas about what sex is that are not from scripture and not from god finally you look at the passage in ephesians chapter 6 4 it says this of the lord what's that saying a christian father's ministry is under the headship of the lord where does it come from of the lord where did i get that idea that you as a parent should be the one teaching your children about sexuality where did i come up with that by the way it's not in the public school curriculum that says by the way we're going to leave the matter of human sexuality to godly parents to take care of instructing their children how many of you found anything like that in common core of the test going out no no no no no no they're not going to teach that they're going to teach we'll do that job for you god says hey dad it's the nurture and admonition of the lord i'm the one who's over all of this and you are there as my divinely appointed assistant that's your job so let me circle back preaching aims to make god's word clear and bring god's people to say yes or no to god so dad if you're a believer this morning whether or not i did it right or wrong in terms of the clarity let me make this point he expects you to obey him fathers do not provoke bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the lord and so you're a believer if you're here this morning and you're a believer and the spirit of god is taking the word of god

[38 : 04] and he is driving it firmly home you in righteousness would say lord listen i need your help and i'm going to go on notice when i'm driving home with my wife i'm going to say listen from here on in i'm going to work at this i need help i need prayer and i am going to improve in bringing my children up in the nurture and admonition of the lord i am not going to be an angry person now by the way wife if he loses it don't have a meltdown in front of your kids that's where you blow in his ear and kiss him on the lips and say honey you get another chance but dad you need to be humble enough to say i need god's help and i'm going to do it right and if you're sitting here this morning in this business of being a godly father there's just a disconnect it may be that the real disconnect is between you and the lord jesus christ the truth of the matter is is that he came into the world to save sinners and if you're sitting here and you do not know christ as your savior this business of relying upon the spirit of god to help you grow and change it's not going to happen it's not going to happen until you come with a broken heart and say i am a sinner who stands justly condemned before a holy god i am convicted of the blackness and the darkness of my own heart and i desperately need christ jesus to save me and i know that he hears the cry of a broken and contrite heart and i come to him and ask him for salvation let's close our eyes and bow our heads as we close our father god this morning as we take the word of god and we hear it speak to us explicitly and clearly we pray that we would be a people that say thank you god for loving us and making your word clear that fathers here would be convicted and with humility would cry out and say spirit of god work in me and help me to be the father that i need to be that those who are here that do not know christ would be drawn to the cross that today would be the day of conviction and repentance to the glory of christ we ask this in your precious name amen you