

The Importance of Fathers

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[0 : 00] All right, well, good morning again, and welcome to faith. And today we're going to deal with an area that I believe is extremely important because I believe we are all waging war in society today.

And it's not about a war that's going on in Iraq or Afghanistan, but I believe it's a war in society that is being waged against our children and against those who would claim to know or would know Jesus Christ as their Savior.

And that is what I believe is going on in our world today. So we're going to spend just the next few moments, and I trust be fairly brief today so we can go and you can cook out and do whatever you want to do or eat out on Father's Day.

So we're going to spend a few moments in God's Word looking at three areas or three ways that I believe, three recommendations to help the next generation.

A father one day was out with his kids, and he had won a toy, and he looked down to his kids to figure out which one would get the present.

[1 : 15] And he said, who's the most obedient, who never talks back to your mother, and who does everything she says? And almost all at once, all five little voices looked up and said, okay, Dad, you get the toy.

So what we're going to talk about today is about how we as dads, how we, but not only as dads, because if you're not a dad today, don't check out, because what we're going to deal with really is universal.

Because it is not just what we teach and train to our children, but it's living a life that makes a difference in the lives of others. And these recommendations go for moms, it goes for friends, it goes for neighbors, it goes for co-workers.

And we honor our fathers because we're told to honor our fathers and our mothers. fathers. Father's Day is a day that is set aside in June to honor our fathers.

And we shouldn't simply honor fathers because it is a holiday, or because it's a tradition, or because there are sales going on all over the stores and the internet.

[2 : 29] We do it because the Bible tells us to. As a matter of fact, let's take our Bibles this morning and let's look at Ephesians chapter 6, where we're going to begin.

Ephesians chapter 6 and verses 1 through 3. And God's word in verse 1 says, Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment, with promise, that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth.

Now notice it doesn't say honor only good moms and dads. It says, Honor your father and mother, for this is right.

And so today we honor all fathers. And we're going to look in God's word and be speaking to dads. But like I said, don't check out if you're a mom or if you're not a dad yet, because I believe this is a battleground that we are all fighting upon every single day.

[3 : 32] Because our society is truly waging war against those whom God wants to know him. And the Bible says he wants all to come to repentance.

He wants everyone to know about him. But we are living in a society that censors knowledge about God. And it seems that children are leaving, young people are leaving the faith in droves.

Once they leave home, once they go to college, it seems that many young people are not coming back to church and are leaving the faith. But this is not anything new.

This has actually been going on for thousands of years. We're going to be looking in the Old Testament book of Judges, Judges chapter 2 and verses 6 through 12.

Now, as a little bit of a background on Judges chapter 2, the nation of Israel had just marched into the promised land. But what they had done was they didn't do things exactly the way God told them to do it.

[4 : 42] What they had done was they had not gotten rid of everyone in the land. They had let some people stay. And the children of Israel had moved in and set up their homes in and around these people who did not worship God.

And the people remained and they settled into that area. Now, just before what we're going to read, God, they were instructed that what they didn't do, they didn't do what God had desired, and they repented.

So with that in mind, let's go to our passage this morning in Judges chapter 2 and verses 6 through 12. Verse 6, and when Joshua had dismissed the people, they had already told them what they had done wrong.

They had repented. And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land. So, verse 7, the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord which he had done for Israel.

But as is life and as things go, now Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died. And he was 110 years old.

[6 : 08] It says they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath-Harse in the mountains of Ephraim on the north side of Mount Gash. When all that generation, so Joshua dies, he's buried.

And then everyone who was alive when Joshua and when the elders of Israel had repented for not doing what God had said, it said when all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them.

Now, what does the Bible say about this next generation? These children that had been born after they had gone into the promised land, these children that had been raised in and around this other culture that did not honor and did not worship, did not serve God.

It said, another generation arose after them who did not want, who did not know the Lord nor the work which he had done for Israel.

And here is the rest of the story. Verse 11 says, then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals.

[7 : 24] When they died because they had not inculcated, because they had not taught what God had done, had not, while they were walking around, while they were out, before they went to bed, when they got up in the morning, they weren't telling them what God had done for them to get them into the promised land.

They weren't telling all the miracles God had performed. They were not teaching them all of the laws and everything that God said they needed to do in order to live a life that was blessed.

And so because they did not do that, they were farming, they were raising their sheep, they were doing everything, they were making a living, and they were feathering their own nest, and they did not teach the next generation about God.

And so the result was, they did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. Here they go. They turned away immediately. And today, in 2017, they don't wait for their parents and the next generation to die off. I mean, they started doing it immediately.

[8 : 37] You know, they worship the God of convenience. Young people worship the God of television. Young people worship the God of video games. And they worship the God of the world.

And what is the world? Well, 1 John 2.16 tells us, for all that's in the world, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life, it's not of the Father, but is of the world.

So we worship, we like it, we see it, we see it, we like it, we worship it. We want to be involved in it. So what we're seeing is, we are not, as a generation, teaching our young people and showing our young people what God can do.

And it's something that we need to be teaching. We need to be, if you pray, talk to God about something and he answers your prayer. Wouldn't it be wise to teach your children, this is what I ask God for and this is what God did.

And even times when you're frustrated. Because they will get frustrated eventually one day. But if they know that, you know what, mom and dad have gone through difficult times.

[9 : 47] And it seems like God didn't answer your prayer, but you still trust him. And just like Job, even though God slay me, even though he doesn't heal me, I'll still trust him.

Even though we don't get what we think we need. God knows best. And if we teach our children that, when they come to the point and they trust God for something, and he doesn't come through in the way they think he should.

But if they know, you know what, mom and dad trusted God anyway. Because they know that God knows what we don't know. And so they don't get blindsided when all of a sudden things don't work out the way they think it should.

So we're teaching them these things. It warmed my heart to hear one of the grandchildren last week had a little bit of a rash or something.

And he just almost in passing came through, Poppy, can you pray for me? I've got a rash or I've got whatever. However, how many families, is that a commonplace thing for a small child to come and say, can you pray for me?

[10 : 55] Because I need prayer. But as we're teaching and as we're doing this, as a matter of fact, Romans 1, 28 to 32, closely parallels what's going on in America today.

Let's look at that together. Romans 1, 28 to 32. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, they gave them over to a debased mind to do those things which are not fitting, being filled with all.

Now this was written in the first century A.D. being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness.

They are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful, who knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same, but also approve of those who practice them.

Do you realize we live in a culture that approves of turning us back on God? From the TV programs, the movies, the court cases. It's okay to make fun of God.

[12 : 26] It's okay to make fun of those who believe in God. They may say, you know what, it worked for mom and dad, but it's just not for me. And it's something that we see this over and over and over.

Excuse me. So this morning, I'd like to give us our marching orders for how to be effective moms and dads, how to be effective co-workers, how to be effective people who want to see God do great and mighty things in their life.

Three suggestions. The first thing is with our words. This is how we train and teach the next generation.

The first way is with our words. Let's look at Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy 6, verses 6 and 7.

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 6, starting with verse 6. And these words which I command you, today shall be in your heart.

[13 : 40] You shall teach them diligently to your children. Teach what? He says the words that I've commanded you, the words that I've taught you. Teach them to your children, and you shall talk of them.

Now here is how we disciple. It's not just a one hour or a 50 minute class one day a week. You know, sometimes we've taken discipling and made it into a didactic, kind of a one-way kind of teaching, and it's something we do in a classroom setting, and we do it once a week, twice a month, whatever.

He says you shall do this. You shall diligently teach these words I've commanded you to your children, and talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Pretty much what does that cover? It covers pretty much everything. When you're at home, when you're out of the home, when you lie down, and when you get up. So in the morning, during the day, before you go to bed, we are teaching these to our children.

How many of you know children like to hear a bedtime story, or like to get read a book before they go to sleep? Almost every child. What do you read them?

[15 : 04] Dr. Seuss, which is not necessarily bad, or a Bible story, or a story about a Bible character. We can do both. But the main thing is, we need to be teaching our children, and using

these teachable moments, to teach them about God.

About what He's done for us, and about what He can do for them. And about Jesus, and about what Jesus did on the cross of Calvary for us. And it's the same thing with our friends. It's the same thing with our co-workers.

When you're on the corridor, when you're in the boat, or when you're wherever, whenever, when you're in the office, or when you're around in the lunchroom, or in the break room, and conversations turn to current events.

Well, how about injecting into the conversation what God has said about current events? We say, well, the Bible is over 2,000 to 4,000 or 5,000 years old.

What do you mean God talking about current events? Well, God. We just read a 2,000 year old passage in the book of Romans.

[16:19] And did it not just about perfectly fit the 21st century? Of course. Because we know that God's Word is living.

It's powerful. It's sharper, the Bible says, than a two-edged sword. It's able to pierce to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. And it's the discerner of the thoughts and the intentions of the heart. Meaning, that's why we can have a group this size. We could have 2,000 here. And people could hear the same message and have 2,000 different applications and said, you were speaking just to me.

Did you read my email this week? Did you have a listening device in our home? Because that's exactly what we needed to hear.

And, you know, preachers often get accused of that. Did somebody tell you what happened this week? No. Well, it's like you were talking about what happened this week.

[17:22] No, that was the Holy Spirit. And He's using that in your heart and in your mind. So, we teach them all of these things. And we do it with our words.

Now, a study was done a number of years ago, and they asked a number of fathers how much time during the day they spent actively engaged with their children.

You know what the average dad said? The average time was 15 to 20 minutes. They said, we spend 15 to 20 minutes with each of our children every day.

But what they did as part of the study, they placed a microphone on the dad when they were at home, when they were with their children, and what they found out was that with this study, the amount of time these dads spent with their children was shocking.

Do you know what the average amount of time, one-on-one with their children, these average middle-class dads? 10 to 15 seconds each in a day.

[18:33] So, 10 to 15 seconds. We're talking face-to-face, eye-to-eye, talking, conversing, communicating. The direct interaction was 37 seconds per day, each interaction, lasting 10 to 15 seconds.

You know, that is, how can we do what God has told us to do with these such small numbers?

The direct interaction, on average, was 2.7 interactions a day. 2.7 interactions per day, lasting 10 to 15 seconds each.

Now, can that be accomplished in 37 seconds, what we've just heard? When you rise up, when you're in the house, when you're out and about, when you rise up, when you go to bed, that really can't be done.

These words that I've commanded you, I want you to teach them to your children. You shall teach them diligently. Talk about them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

[19:44] So, first thing we do is, with our words, whether it's to our children, whether it's to our grandchildren, even to our friends, even to others. You see, we are discipling with our words what we say.

The second way that we do it is, with our time. First, with our words, but secondly, with our time.

Some of you may have heard of Robert Shuler. He was a pastor of the Crystal Cathedral. He once said, he chose to fail so he could succeed. And what he meant by that was, he really loved to play golf.

And he said, I really could become better at golf, but I chose not to play so I could spend more time with my children.

I chose to fail at golf so I could succeed with my family. Even though he loved golf, he couldn't juggle the ministry, his family, and his hobbies, so he chose his children over his hobby.

[20 : 52] Now, how are we doing with our time? You know, we looked at Deuteronomy 6. Let's look again at verses 7 and following. We just read that. You shall teach them diligently, what?

The words that God commanded to your children. shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. He says, you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be, the words, shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

You shall write them on the doorpost of your house and on your gates. Now, we know those who are many of the Jews, many of them down through the ages really took this literally and wrote down some of God's words, put them in a box, and got this little box strapped on their forehead.

I don't think that's what God meant because you look kind of foolish. But what he meant was this is how important it is. Let this be a reminder and we need to be teaching them.

Do you know, dads, what's important to you? Well, I'll tell you how you can find out. Look at your calendar. Look at your schedule.

[22 : 05] Look at your checkbook. And that will tell you what's important to you. That will tell you. Ultimately, many dads say they love their children. They love their kids.

But, when you look at their schedule, when you look at how much time they put into work and extra things that they do and the hobbies and all these things, it really doesn't add up.

You know, and many dads really buy into the typical, you know, I've got to make a good living for my kids. I've got to make it comfortable. You know, I want them to have more than I had.

And on and on and on. I want to provide for my family. Now, that's biblical. But the unbiblical part is neglecting and spending 10 to 15 seconds or 37 seconds a day with your children rather than doing what God has told you to do.

The story is told about a dad who asked his daughter, honey, which would you prefer? Quality time with me or quantity of time? She said, dad, hands down, quality of time.

[23 : 15] I want quality of time and I want lots of it. You see, you get the picture. Quality is important, but quantity is important as well.

So quality time over a lot of quantity I believe makes a big, big difference. One day, a little girl had come to her dad.

He was in his office and he was working in his study. And she said, dad, I'm going to draw a picture and I want you to come see it. He said, honey, I'm really, really busy right now. I don't have time to look at your picture.

So she went out and she came back later. She said, dad, do you have time yet to see the picture that I drew? And he said, no, honey, can't you see that I'm busy? I don't have time to look at your picture right now.

Well, a couple of hours passed and so he went and he found his daughter and he said, honey, I'm ready to see your picture now. And so what she did was she came and she showed him her picture.

[24 : 17] It was a picture of her and her mom and her brother and the family dog. They were outside under the bright sunshine and he looked at the picture and he said, honey, where am I in your picture?

Why am I not in the picture? The little girl said, well, daddy, because you're in your office. Sad commentary, huh? So I think we need to see and understand that God wants us to be not only investing our words, the words of God, into our children, into others, but also using our time.

Because if we want to win this war that is being waged against or for our children, we need to spend as much quantity and quality of time with them as possible.

The third thing, not only with our words, not only, excuse me, with, excuse me, not only with our words, not only with our time, but with our lives.

all these, these three are important. Genesis chapter 18 and verses 18 and 19 I believe is a very revealing passage.

[25 : 39] Don't want us to look at that right now and see what it says for us today. Talking about Abraham. Since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him.

God says, for I have known him in order that he may command his children and his household after him that they keep the ways of the Lord to do righteousness and justice that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has spoken to him.

See, the way we live our life is a direct reflection of how our children will grow up. There's a song that talks about that.

There's a song that talks about our children wanting to imitate us and it's a song I want to be like you and it goes like this. I want to be just like you because he wants to be just like me.

I want to be a holy example for his innocent eyes to see. Help me be a living Bible Lord that my little boy can read. I want to be just like you because he wants to be just like me.

[26 : 55] You can see that in your children. You can see that in your grandchildren. They'll repeat the words you say. They will begin to walk like you. They will begin to use the same terminology that you use.

They love you. They want to be just like you. And who are we to them?

And how are we living? How are we talking? How are we spending our time? And what are we doing with them? I want to close with this. 2 Kings 14.3 speaks about a particular individual.

And I think what we see in this example is an example that is still happening today in the lives of many. 2 Kings 14.3 talks about and he did talk about Amaziah and he did what was right in the sight of the Lord.

Yet, not like his father David. And here's the telling portion. Amaziah did everything as his father Joash had done.

[28 : 06] What does that tell us? He wanted to be like his dad. He followed in his dad's footsteps. And the question is, what kind of example are we setting for others?

Even the Apostle Paul said this, imitate me as I imitate him. Meaning, the Apostle Paul was saying, I'm trying to live a life to be more like Jesus.

And so, as I'm doing that, he's saying, you can't go wrong by imitating what I'm doing because I'm imitating what Jesus, or I'm trying to imitate Jesus.

So by the same token, the lives that we live, the things that we say, the priorities that we have, the next generation is going to be watching, they're going to be seeing, and most likely imitating.

And so, as fathers, as mothers, as grandparents, as aunts, and uncles, and as friends, as others, what example are we setting by what we say, what example are we setting by what we do, and what example are we setting by our priorities?

[29 : 25] Now, how are you doing? Are you winning the battle? If you say, well, pastor, I don't think so, you know, I think I've been kind of slacking in this area, well, apologize to your children, saying, I haven't been the example I need to be, and by God's grace beginning right now, I am going to trust Him to make that change in my life.

And then from this day forward, because you see, it's never too late. You might say, well, I feel that I've wasted all these years. That may be the case, but you still have today forward in the time God allows you to have, with those who are impressionable, those who are looking to you, those who trust you, and those over whom you have influence.

So, the time is now, and we can start afresh and anew. ega■■ is here, and I can start