

Honor Your Father Eph. 6

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Date: 18 June 2017

[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Take your Bibles and turn back to Ephesians chapter 6.

When I was a little boy, probably, I don't know, 10, 11, 12 years old, I decided I wanted to be a dad. I only wanted that because I didn't really have this close relationship that my hero had.

My hero was Lucas McCain. Who knows who Lucas McCain was? Hold your hand up. Lucas McCain was the rifleman. He had a boy named Mark. First off, he could shoot that gun like crazy.

I have a gun. Kind of like that. I got a little .357. I can't do that. I'm afraid I'd shoot my armpit out if I ever tried to do that kind of shooting. But I wanted to be a daddy because I wanted that close relationship with my child.

So I'm going to talk to you this morning just briefly about honoring our dads and talk about that just a little bit. But when Chris was born, our oldest son was born in August of 1975, that was the easiest thing in the world for me to be in love.

[1 : 09] I was so in love. I took him home, and I hugged him, and I kissed him, and I blew on his belly button, and you name it. I did. None of you dads ever did that.

If any of you did that, say amen. Have you done that? Thank you. Only two or three of you have. And my dad never told me he loved me. My dad never told me he loved me.

He came from a generation that just didn't do that sort of thing. And so I'd been kissing on Chris and loving on Chris and hugging on Chris and sitting with Chris.

And one day, I noticed he started getting to look like a human being. He moved out of baby stage and into human being stage. You know what I'm talking about. I mean, they actually start walking, and they go to the bathroom, and they can do all their stuff.

And when that happened, I found it much more difficult to be so expressive because I began to feel like, well, you know, he's a man, and I'm a man, and we're not supposed to hug, and we're not supposed to kiss.

[2 : 04] And my daddy never did any of that stuff with me. And so I kind of started backing off. And then I got to thinking one day, I have to force myself to express love to him because it feels strange to me because I'd never seen that modeled, but I wanted to be a good dad, and I wanted to be able to be expressive and to say I love you and so on as that.

I got to Mexico, and while we were in Mexico studying Spanish, I went to the bookstore, and I bought all the books about how to read, like they would teach a first grader.

So I brought home the first grade reading books in second, third, and fourth, and I was so excited as I was learning how to read in Spanish. I was learning how to say see the cat run, you know, that kind of stuff. And so as I got further in, I got to Mother's Day in one of the books, and boy, they had poems from mothers, and they loved on mothers, and they talked good about mothers, and they had songs they sang and pictures of mothers.

So I was like, man, I just can't wait until I get to Father's Day to see what they do for Father's Day. I finished the book, and I still haven't found what they do for Father's Day because we just don't hardly make the barometer.

You know that. Somebody said Mother's Day is the day you spend a lot of money. Father's Day is the day you're trying to still pay that back, so you spend less on that gift. So turn with me, if you would, to Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 2, and I want to take you through five things today.

[3 : 24] I'll tell you now what they are in case I don't get them all done. I want five gifts you can give your dad. Five gifts you can give your dad. Number one, honor. Number one, honor. And I'm going to explain what that means in a minute.

Number two, understanding. Number two, understanding. Number three, appreciation. Number four, respect. And number five, forgiveness. Number five, forgiveness.

And you'll be shocked with that one maybe. I don't know, but we'll see in just a second. Look at Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 2. Honor thy father. Father, I pray you'd help me to love on your people and to have a good time and enjoy you and enjoy them and enjoy your word and help us to be better dads.

And I pray you'd help us to honor you, and I pray you'd help me to be a better son, to honor my dad and to think of my dad. And I pray, dear God, that you would help all the children in this room to love and honor their dads.

And I'll give you praise for all you do in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, if your dad's still living, hold your hand up. If your dad's still living, hold your hand up. Okay, I'd just like to talk to you about what to do for dad. What do you get, dad?

[4 : 24] Not a tie. Not a tie and not a bottle of aftershave. I'm going to give you five gifts you can give him this morning. Respect for fatherhood's at an all-time low.

Being a dad used to be something to look up to. The rifle man. Father knows best. Little House on the Prairie and the Waltons, but today in your generation, it's Homer Simpson and other doofus dads.

Today, over 25% of American fathers report having no significant contact or limited contact with their children in the last six months. But being a dad is the most important job any of us will ever do.

Being a dad is your job. It's a job you will never lose unless you quit. This job takes a lifetime to do and yields a lifetime of benefits. And no one can take your place in your children's lives.

Look with me, if you would, at a verse you know by heart, Proverbs 22 and verse 6. The Bible says, Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he's old, he will not depart from it.

[5 : 27] I'm not going to preach to you about what you're supposed to do. But the beautiful thing about that word train is it's used in our Bible and it's translated in other places as dedicate. It's the idea of putting in the way.

It's the idea of I'm going to show my child how to be and do what they ought to do. The time we spend with our family is far more important than the money we spend.

They need your time and presence. In the first church that I started, I had a man in the church I loved very much. He was a Century 21 real estate salesman. He was probably the most wealthy guy in our church at the time.

And one time he told me, I do not understand. I have given my children everything they could ever want. But his kids didn't like him. His two sons rebelled against him.

And I had to say to him, though he was much older than me, I had to say they really wanted you, not a motorcycle. They really wanted you, not another toy. Your children need you and your presence.

- [6 : 27] Your children need you to believe in them and validate them. Your children will learn how to have a family, how to be a husband and women, how to be a wife from home. Your children are watching every move you make.
- I'm getting to the five things in a second. But you know, as a dad, the way my children are going to treat their wives is the way they're going to see me treat their mom. The way my daughters are going to expect to be treated is the way their mom got treated.
- They need you. Our children should hear how much we love them from us. I was on the back porch one day taking a bath in the tub, the tin tub on the back porch.
- We'd drawn the water out of the well. And my brother had been out front in the yard. And my brother came running up and he said, you're never going to believe what dad said about you. He said you were a hard worker. He said he loved you.
- And he said he was proud of you. And he told Mr. Greenway that. And he came back and told me that. And when he told me that, I was like, good night. He's never said that to me. I had no idea. I'm feeling real good right now.
- [7 : 27] I had this very week somebody say, they heard their dad say, son, make sure your kids know you love them. Because their dad died and he never told them that. They should hear it from us.
- Maybe the only thing we can do sometimes is be there. But we should be there. Your children will soon be gone. So cherish the moment. Those of you who have young children are like, that might be a blessed day.
- Get them out of the house. Get all the stuff. But you will soon be alone. And you don't know that as much as it's really going to happen. How we are with our children will affect everything in their life from now on.
- A fellow told me not long ago, every man orbits around his father. Some trying to escape and some trying to enjoy it. But every man orbits around the father.
- Love your wife. Give your children your time and be followable. Let me read you a poem by General Douglas MacArthur called A Father's Prayer. Build me a son, O Lord, who will be strong enough to know when he is weak, brave enough to face himself when he is afraid, one who will be proud and unbending in honest defeat, and humble and gentle in victory.
- [8 : 37] Build me a son whose wishbone will not be where his backbone should be, a son who will know thee and that to know himself is the foundation stone of knowledge.
- Lead him, I pray, not in the path of ease and comfort, but under the stress and spur of difficulties and challenge. Here let him learn to stand up in the storm. Here let him learn compassion for those who fail.
- Build me a son whose heart will be clean, whose goal will be high, a son who will master himself before he seeks to master other men. One who will learn to laugh, yet never forget how to weep.
- One who will reach into the future, yet never forget the past. And after all these things are his, add, I pray, enough of a sense of humor so that he may always be serious, yet never take himself too seriously.
- Give him humility so that he may always remember the simplicity of greatness, the open mind of true wisdom, and meekness of true strength. Then I, his father, will dare to whisper, I have not lived in vain.
- [9 : 41] I want to take now to show you some Bible verses and talk to you about five gifts I think you can give your parents. Number one, honor. Number two, understanding. Number three, appreciation. Number four, respect.

And number five, forgiveness. Look at the Bible, if you would, in Ephesians 6, 2 again. The Bible says, honor thy father and thy mother. The Bible tells us to honor and to obey our parents, but there's a big difference.

So obeying is just doing what you're told, but honoring is showing great respect. And let me give you some ways that all of us can honor our dads. If I could say to you how we can honor our dads.

Number one, find your purpose in life. Find your purpose. Your dad ought to be able to be proud of what you turn out to be. He ought to be able to know you found out what you were supposed to do with your life.

Your dad ought to be proud when you keep yourself pure. When you honor and respect the woman that you're about to marry. Your dad will be proud when you prepare for life.

[10 : 38] Look, if you will, with me at Lamentations 3, 27. Talking to the young people, talking to the people that are sons, and everybody in this room is a son. And so here's some things we can do for our dads.

We can prepare for life, and we can get ready to live the life. We have Lamentations 3, verse 27. The Bible said, It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

Would you write that down? Would you underline that? Would you make a note here? If you're going to be a good son, you need to learn to work. You will honor your dad when you show him, I know why I'm on this planet, and I'm learning how to work, and I'm learning how to take care of myself.

Because he's worried about you. He's concerned. You are his world. Look, if you would, at Proverbs 24, and verse 27. Proverbs 24, and verse 27.

You honor your dad by preparing to live and to work. And here's a verse that's really kind of an unusual verse, because it says to you, Don't build a house until you've got a job.

[11 : 42] Don't get married. Do you know what you're going to do with yourself? Don't go off half-cocked. That's what my dad might have said. That's what half-cocked. You're not ready for what you're going to do.

You don't know where you're going to go. Nobody wants to be the daddy of a bum. So the Bible says, Prepare thy work without, make it fit for thyself in the field, and afterwards build your house.

So, you know, it's a way to honor your dad, is to figure out what it is you ought to do with your life, is to figure out what it is you ought to do with your life. And so here's where that starts. You know where honoring your dad starts is, Honor your dad starts with knowing you're a sinner, knowing you're on your way to hell, and knowing Jesus Christ.

Because the blunt truth is, you could get the best job in the world, and your daddy could be proud because you're the president of Apple, or you're the president of Exxon. He could be proud of you for those things, but you will die, and you'll go to hell, and there'll be no honor to your dad.

If it's a Christian dad, for sure, for sure, if he's a Christian dad, there will be no honor not knowing where you're going to go. Can I just be honest? I've stood by dads as they buried their sons.

[12 : 51] I've stood by dads as they buried their children, and I've stood by sons as they buried their dads. And one of the ways to honor your dad is to say, Man, I want to know God. Because everything in life comes from that.

You need to understand this world offers this. The Bible says in John 10, 10, The thief comes but for to steal, to kill, and to destroy. That's what the world's about.

That's what the world's system's about. That's what everything around you is about, is how to destroy you. And they don't mind destroying you with money. The world's all in favor of you having money and prestige and power.

The world's all in favor of you doing anything that keeps you out of heaven and keeps you from knowing Jesus. But the Bible says the thief comes but to steal, to kill, and to destroy. But I am come that they might have life and have it more abundant.

You know where life is? Life's in knowing Jesus. Life is in knowing Jesus. And that's how you'll honor your parents. Number two, show understanding to your father. Show understanding.

[13 : 51] Number one, honor him. Number two, understand him. Go with me, if you would, to Proverbs chapter 3 and verse 12. I don't think there's any job I've ever had that was any more difficult than being a dad.

We've raised four children all into maturity, all living on their own, all taking care of their own families. And there are 19 grandkids running around out there. But there's not a job in the world that's as hard as being a dad.

And so dads could use some understanding. Have you ever noticed how dads, you know, dads like the hitman in the family. Mama's sweet and daddy's the whipper. Mama's the one that loves you and dad's the guy that comes in with all the rules.

Mama's like, if you don't behave, daddy will be home after a while. I used to hate that. You walk in the door and the kid's all day long been dreading you getting home. Because when you come home, you're the one that's going to do the beating.

But look what the Bible says in Proverbs 3, 12. Understand him when he corrects you. Look what the Bible says about correction. So you'll know about your dad. The Bible says, for whom the Lord loves, he corrects.

[14 : 51] You see the line, Lord loves. And Lord loves, Lord corrects. Lord loves, Lord corrects. Even as a father. So a dad, a human dad's learning from the real dad that if he really loves you, he'll discipline you.

The son in whom he delights. The son in whom he delights. And I'll tell you this about your dad. I can only know this from my own children. Our oldest son will be 42 in August.

And I can only tell you, I am so happy I'm a daddy. I am so proud I get to be a dad. But I'll tell you, your dad needs to be understood.

Because he is the heavy. He is the guy that's been said, don't do that. Stop that. Start this. And he's always doing it. And you think he's against you. I know this. Thinking about my own dad.

When I look back and I realize, my dad was one tough cookie. He was born in 1929. He caused the Great Depression. Amen. He's born in August. The Great Depression happened in October.

[15 : 51] But you know, my dad was a tough bird. I mean, one day he was chopping some wood. And he ran an axe into his foot. Split it all the way into the bone.

He walked back to the house with blood gushing everywhere. Went in the house and told my mother, we're going to have to go to the doctor. I've cut myself a little bit. Blood's gushing everywhere. They don't wait for an ambulance.

And mama said, I'll drive. He said, no, you won't. I'm driving. And he drove himself to the hospital. He walked in blood gushing everywhere. His boot's full. They got to cut the boot off. And the doctor said, I'm going to put you to sleep. He said, I want to watch.

You put the leg foot up. I want to watch what you do. That's my dad. Now, I get a splinter and I cry and call for Betty and ask her to come help me. That's the guy. But you know, he was hard, man. He was hard.

He was hard about working. He was hard about me being disciplined. He was hard about me getting up. But later on, as a young man getting my first job, a man said to me, I don't know who taught you how to work, but boy, you know how to work.

[16 : 48] He said, why do you do it like that? I said, because I'm afraid he'll kill me. Because that was my dad. Say, man. But he needs a little understanding. He needs to be honored, but he needs some understanding.

Look at chapter 4, verse 1. Proverbs chapter 4 and verse 1. By the way, if the Lord loves you, he's going to discipline you. Some of you have been playing with sin, and you've been doing things you ought not do, and you can honestly know that God's been dealing with you and convicting you of your sin, and you've even seen evidence that things aren't where they ought to be because something seems to be going wrong.

Well, there's somebody bigger than you working on you, and he's only doing it because he loves you. In Proverbs chapter 4 and verse 1, understand that he wants you to understand life. Understand he wants you to understand life.

Now, he loves you, and your mommy would keep you in little lacy stuff until you was forever old. You little boys, you'd have been wearing lace when you was 12 if you let your mama do it.

She'd be painting your hair and putting some perfume on you. Your dad's like, kick him in the rear and throw him out in the woods and let him get hurt and let him do something. Bless God, he's got to grow up. And mama's like, come here, let me give you a hug. You fall down, mama said, let me put a Band-Aid on you.

[17 : 56] Your dad said, oh, he don't need no Band-Aid. So look at it, if you would. Look at Proverbs 4, 1. Hear you children, the instruction of a father, and attend. Pay attention to get understanding.

You know what, your dad needs some understanding because really he's been working to help you understand life. I do marriage counseling, and sometimes I hear lots of things about family and things that go on.

And sometimes dad's seen as having been quite distant or quite rough. But the truth is, maybe he needs some understanding. Look at Proverbs 30, verse 17. You don't have to turn to that one.

But I want you to understand that your dad doesn't want you to get hurt. Your dad doesn't want you to get hurt. He really does have a reason for what he's telling you. He doesn't want you to get hurt.

Now, this is one of those horrible verses in the Bible. The Bible says, The eye that mocks at his father and despises to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it, and the young eagles shall eat it. He'll be dead. But you know what?

[18 : 55] Dad's trying to say to you, I don't want that to happen. I want you to enjoy life. I want you to learn how to prosper in life. Our son David, our son David was, he was born to tempt fate.

When he was born, by the time he was like 10 or 12, he'd already broken nine or 10 bones. I mean, when he came in from riding his bicycle one day and his arm looked like an S, he did just like he held up and said, I think I broke my arm.

We're like, I think so. Bones about sticking out of it. I think so. So he got, we got him, he wanted inline skates. That was the thing back then. And he wanted inline skates. And I told him, I said, son, do not do stupid stuff.

Inline skates are for stupid people doing stupid stuff. But you're my son and you won't do that. He said, okay, I won't do that, dad. And every time he'd go out, I said, now, son, don't do no really stupid stuff.

I mean, you can jump a little bit, but don't do any stupid stuff. So one day his legs destroyed. We pick him up and take him to the hospital. And I said, son, what were you doing? He said, I was just skating, dad.

[19 : 57] And then Betty goes to pick up the other shoe. They'd taken off the other skate. And that lady said, we don't know what happened. He's really good. He can jump up in the air and twist around and slide on stuff. He can do the craziest stuff you've ever seen.

Now his legs busted now. Your dad loves you. Give him a little understanding. Give him a little understanding. Understand he feels a lot of pressure to do right by you and your mother.

I think any good man does. I think every man's like, man, I love my wife. I love my children. And I want to do right by them. So you ought to give him a little understanding. He is a man and not so good at showing emotions like your mama.

You know, Betty's got this turn on and turn off the tear thing. I mean, oh, I sometimes think it's all fake. I've been living with her for 44 years. I'm still not sure.

I mean, all you got to do is you can say a key word and she can turn them on. You can say something else. She can turn them off. I don't do that. She's going to hug everybody.

[20 : 58] If you get close, she's hugging you. My kid gets hurt. I'm like, son, you shouldn't have done it. I told you you shouldn't have done it. But he's like, but you need to understand men don't have it as easy.

So understand him. Number three, show him some appreciation or gratitude. Show him some appreciation or gratitude. Realize he worries about you. Paul said, this is what Paul said.

He lists all the problems he had, beatings, stonings, being shipwrecked, going hungry. And the last thing he said was, and daily the care of the churches. Somehow Paul listed worried about his church people with being beaten.

Go read the story. And you know what? Daddy's caring about you. So dad's over here working. And he's working and he's sweating and he's doing all that.

You need to think about that he's also worrying about you, the care of his children. Think about his job, his burden, and everything that he does to take care of you. Why don't you ask his advice and follow it and live out his life lessons.

[22 : 04] Say thank you. Just say thank you. Why don't you go to your dad today? It's Father's Day. Why don't you just go to him and say thank you? Not just thank you for the money he's given you.

Not just thank you. He taught you how to work. If you're successful where you are, it's very likely because old dad, who was a pain, taught you some things. Very likely a good thank you would help.

It's not just the attitude of being grateful, by the way. It's the action. Number four, respect your father. Respect your father. Leviticus 19.3 says, you shall fear every man, his mother and his father.

I looked that up. I put that verse in here just for this reason. It says you should fear your father. That word fear there is a translation of a word that really would carry the idea of high respect, reverence, awe for your dad.

And your mom, but today it's for your dad. It's like you should look at your dad and be like, wow, what a man. Speak kindly of your dad.

[23 : 13] Be considerate of your dad and his time. Learn, let them into your life. And talk to them from your heart. I was reading this to Betty yesterday.

And she said, what? You know, women are in your life. You talk to your mommy. You go in there and mommy hugs you. And you just spill your guts.

But dad, oh, hush. You don't talk to dad. Dad don't talk to you. But he probably really wants in your life. He really does love you. He's just a little hard-headed. He don't know how to do it. That's the problem with being a man.

He just doesn't know how. You know, my dad, I taught my dad to say I love you. Before he died, he said I love you. We were riding down the road one day in his truck. And he was probably 70 or 75.

And my dad never cried. This is a guy who can drive an axe through his foot and go to the hospital and not cry. I mean, this guy, tough. You look up tough in the dictionary, you're going to see his picture.

[24 : 13] We're riding down the road. And my daddy said, I want you to know I love you. And he started telling me some real nice stuff about me and my brother and sisters.

I was sitting over like in shock. Like, can you believe him? The mountain is crying. The mean guy is crying. And then he goes, don't you ever tell nobody about me crying.

Because men don't cry. That's what he said. He only knew. Hey, dad, if you're listening. They really want to know what's going on.

Most of the time, I want to know what's happening. I need to talk to my wife to find out what the kids are saying to her. Don't try to change it. I want to give you the last one. And this one is probably the hardest one. Forgive him.

Girls have daddy issues. And most everybody has dad issues. Most of us have not got the sweetest relationship with our dad.

[25 : 14] So I want to talk to you real quickly about forgiving your dad. And I would just like you to take this home and to think about it with me, if you would. In Luke chapter 23 and verse 34, Jesus said, Father, forgive them that are killing me.

They don't know what they're doing. And so I'd like to tell you, dads make a lot of mistakes. My dad made a lot of mistakes. I made a lot of mistakes. One day, I think we were in Adikipa.

And I honestly think I'm like the greatest dad in the world. Because in my head, I'm a great dad. In my head, I have worked at having my kids included in my head. I have provided everything I can in my head.

I've taken them everywhere. I've done everything with them. So in my head, I'm a good dad. And so one day, my son Chris walks in. And he said, I just want to tell you something. You have stunk as a dad.

It was the worst day I think I could ever remember. He wasn't teasing. And he wasn't playing. And he unloaded on me. He said, the Peruvians have had a dad. We haven't had a dad. You criticize all the time.

[26 : 19] You're always pushing us. And he just let me have it. Now, most of you have never had to experience that. And you never will. Because you didn't raise a guy who would be the kind of, the quality of leader my son would be.

But we make mistakes. And your dad makes mistakes. So I'd like to ask you to forgive him. Men aren't as sensitive. Dads aren't as sensitive to their children like mama is. Dads were absent a great deal of the time.

Dads were absent a great deal of the time. Sometimes dads almost seem to be in competition with their children to be the center of attention. See, when Betty and I got married, we were married almost two years before Chris was born.

And in those two years, it was like the most wonderful thing you've ever seen. We walked into that house, and my wishes were her commands. She lived and breathed to please me.

Then Chris was born. And I moved to position number two. And I would say, baby, could I? And she'd say, let me take care of Chris, and then I'll see about that. Okay.

[27 : 19] And she said, I can't help it, honey. The baby needs our help. And then Stephanie was born, and I was number three. And then Joy was born, and I was number four. And then David was born, and I was number five.

And now there are 20 children, and I'm number 26, 20 grandchildren. Not really. They moved out. Praise Jesus. Can I remind you to forgive your dad because of this?

Number one, your dad's only a man, and he's flawed and failing. Just like you, by the way. The Bible says in Psalm 103, 13, Jesus talking, or God talking through the Holy Spirit writing the Scriptures, like as a father pities his children, like he feels mercy for his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him.

He has mercy on them that fear him. He knows our frame. He remembers we're dust. You need to remember your dad's a man. So right now, maybe if you think about your dad, some negative things pop to the top of your mind, and that's what you think about.

Remember. Remember your dad was raised in a flawed world by flawed parents. My dad was a hard man. At my uncle's funeral, my dad had been dead.

[28 : 36] One of my cousins said, sorry, I didn't make it to the funeral. And I said, well, it's okay. You know, everything went off. Everything's fine. He's buried. Everything's fine. He said, you know, your dad was a cruel man.

And I looked at him, and I said, you think you need to tell me he was cruel? But then my dad, at the age of six, became an orphan. And he had three little brothers.

And they shipped them from pillar to post, and they were put in the foster system of the day, and then put with aunts and uncles and cousins, and beaten, and worked, and hungry.

And by the time he was in ninth grade, he ran away from home and lived his own life on the street, or whatever it took. Then he went in the United States Navy. He was a hard man. But if I think about it, maybe he had reason to be.

Time to forgive, old dad. Maybe your dad had something going on. Maybe there's more to the story than you think there is. By the way, we live in a day and time when there's plenty of money, and I don't mean this wrong, because you're going to say, I don't have enough money, because you never will.

[29 : 39] But your mama and your daddy, they probably didn't even know about the kind of money you got. Or your grandparents or the luxuries that you have. Your dad was raised in a flawed world by flawed parents.

One day, you're going to need mercy and forgiveness, too. So sow it now. What's really funny? I was in my son's house, and he was fussing at his children.

I said, hey, don't. He said, you did that to me. I said, you hate me. I'm just trying for you not to have a little conference when your son walks in and says, you are a lousy dad.

He said, you should forget that I said that. And I said, I'll never forget you said that. You're going to need some mercy. No dad does a good job, to be honest. You may think you did, but your kids don't agree with you.

And if they do, it's because they've learned how to forgive you. Make a decision to forgive. Just do it. Just do it.

[30 : 38] I can choose what I want to think about my dad. I can choose to think about the fact that as a little boy that surrendered to be a missionary, my dad, without explaining things to me, never let me do any of the dangerous things on the farm anymore.

All of a sudden, I wasn't allowed to run a chainsaw. I wanted to run a chainsaw. Later on, he told me, I was afraid you'd hurt yourself. You were supposed to be a medical doctor. You were going to be a surgeon. I didn't want you getting hurt. And when it was dangerous stuff, he put my brother to do it.

My brother's mad at me and my dad because he got stuck with all the nasty work. When I got to seventh grade, or ninth grade, I guess, in the hills of Tennessee, they didn't offer any decent schools.

And my dad went to school and said, my boy wants to go to college. And I know nobody here goes to college, but my boy's going to college. And this school is going to provide him every class he needs. They said, we legally don't have to unless there's seven students.

My dad said, I'll find them. And I went through school with six other guys because dad did that. I can choose. I can choose to think about the beatings, and I got them.

[31 : 41] Or I can choose to think about him going to school and getting me the education. I can think about him being cruel, or I can think about him teaching me how to work. I think he just didn't know what he was doing sometimes.

I think he was trying to do the best he could. I want you to forgive your dad. So today, why don't you make a decision to love and honor your dad? Isn't it amazing how much we love and honor mama?

I want you to decide today to love and honor dad. Most important thing of all is this. Salvation. You see, your dad was raised in a flawed world.

Your dad's a flawed human being. But you're a flawed human being. And if it weren't for grace and mercy, you'd go to hell. Every one of us in this room need to realize, I have sinned against the holy God.

I have sinned against the holy God. I deserve to go to hell. Austin Gardner, 62 years of age, been a missionary for 20 years, been a pastor almost all of my adult life.

[32 : 41] I have been in the ministry for the 44 years that we've been alive as married people, adult people. I've been in the ministry all that time. And yet God would say, son, you have no right to think you can go to heaven when you die.

The only way you go to heaven is because you trust Jesus and what he did on the cross of Calvary. So if you're here today and you're not saved, today's the day that you get saved. And if you are saved, you need to stop being so judgmental about the other guy.

Look in the mirror just a second and find out, as a man, I've failed too. I don't need to be judging my dad's heart. I don't need to be judging my dad's heart. I need to be loving him. So I give you five things I ask you to do.

Honor him. Honor him. Understand him. Appreciate him. Respect him. And forgive him. I know your dad made mistakes.

There is a father who makes no mistakes. That's a heavenly father. And he loves us and he's merciful and he does all we need. And if you're not saved today, you can be saved.

[33 : 39] And if you are saved, we ought to go home and honor and respect our dads. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com, where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.