**FATHER’S DAY – CREATING A GODLY LEGACY**

Father’s day is once again upon us, and for me it is not only Father’s day but Grandfather’s day, too. Maybe it’s the same for you.

So what does it mean to be a Father? Being a father is an incredible privilege and one we should thank God for every day. Family is God’s good idea when we do it His way. Being a father means personal sacrifice – we faithfully go to work every day and ‘bring home the bacon’. We unconditionally love our wives and children. But when we consider our heavenly Father’s sacrifice for us, any of the sacrifices we make for our children seem small by comparison.

I will begin with a variety of quotes, each portraying another aspect of fathering.

We knew once the Creation was broken, true fathering would be much more lacking than mothering. Don't misunderstand me, both are needed—but an emphasis on fathering is necessary because of the enormity of its absence. *~ William Paul Young*

Listen, there is no way any true man is going to let children live around him in his home and not discipline and teach, fight and mold them until they know all he knows. His goal is to make them better than he is. Being their friend is a distant second to this. *~ Victor Devlin*

There is nothing that moves a loving father's soul quite like his child's cry. *~ Joni Eareckson Tada*

The greatest mark of a father is how he treats his children when no one is looking. *~ Dan Pearce*

When I was twenty-something, I asked my father, “When did you start feeling like a grownup?” His response: “Never.”  *~ Shannon Celebi*

I'm not the boss of my house. I don't know how I lost it, I don't know when I lost it, I don't really think I ever had it. But I've seen the boss's job ... and I don't want it! *~ Bill Cosby*

It has been said that as goes the family, so goes the world. It can also be said that as goes the father, so goes the family. *~ Voddie T. Baucham, Jr.*

When a father gives to his son, both laugh; when a son gives to his father, both cry. *~ William Shakespeare*

My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person: he believed in me. *~ Jim Valvano*

I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection. *~ Sigmund Freud*

I believe that what we become depends on what our fathers teach us at odd moments, when they aren't trying to teach us. We are formed by little scraps of wisdom. ~ *Umberto Eco*

In the baby lies the future of the world. Mother must hold the baby close so that the baby knows it is his world, but the father must take him to the highest hill so that he can see what his world is like. *~ Mayan Indian Proverb*

He didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it. *~ Clarence Budington Kelland*

My father used to play with my brother and me in the yard. Mother would come out and say, "You’re tearing up the grass." "We’re not raising grass," Dad would reply. "We’re raising boys." *~ Harmon Killebrew*

You will find that if you really try to be a father, your child will meet you halfway. *~ Robert Brault*

It’s a great joy but no test of love or commitment to take your son to a ball game. You really prove your credentials as a good dad when you are willing to take your daughter shopping— more than once. *~ Michael Josephson*

Do I want to be a hero to my son. No. I would like to be a very real human being. That's hard enough. *~ Robert Downey, Jr.*

I talk and talk and talk, and I haven’t taught people in 50 years what my father taught by example in one week. *~ Mario Cuomo*

Being a great father is like shaving. No matter how good you shaved today, you have to do it again tomorrow.*~ Reed Markham*

One more quote: **‘And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.’ Joshua 24:15**

Being a Godly father and leading your family in the ways of God is a choice you as a father will make – or not. Each of us must decide if we will obey the Lord or if we will follow man-made idols. Having children is the beginning of a great but wonderful responsibility. These are little lives that need to be trained and molded into who it is God has called them to be. As father’s we must choose to be controlled by the Spirit of God, daily. The way we live and lead as father’s shows the strength of our commitment to serving God with all our hearts, mind and strength. Think of it this way – our children and grandchildren are an ongoing investment, a gift we leave to a world we soon won’t be a part of, but which we will impact for eternity through the generations that follow us.

During the parenting years, time seems to fly by so quickly. One year you are teaching your child to walk and it seems the next year you are teaching your grandchildren to walk. Don’t let time just slip by. Don’t leave yourself full of regrets. At the end of their lives no parent has ever said, I wish I had spent more time at the office, or more time working or more time watching TV, but it has often been said, I wish I had been there for my kids, I wish I had spent more time with them. There is no substitute for time spent with your children and no substitute for your undivided attention. Take your family with you everywhere you go and involve them in everything you do – within reason. Be sure to create fun and happy memories – plan a week or two together every year – a holiday. Unforgettable and spontaneous events happen that will be remembered and laughed about for years to come. ‘Remember the time…..’

The greatest inheritance you can pass on to your children and grandchildren is an inheritance of bold and deep faith. **Psalm 71:18 ‘So even to old age and gray** **hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation,** **your power to all those who come.’** Brag on God, tell of His excellent goodness, and all He has done during the many years of your life.

Lead by example, fear God, respect and reverence Him, so that your children may be blessed. **Psalm 112:1,2 ‘Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments. His offspring will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.’** Good men’s sons have a special heritage. God is the foundation and the source of all wisdom and obeying Him is the path to wisdom; the path to a long and prosperous life.

Life without God as the foundation is senseless. **Read Psalm 127, Living Bible.** All of our life’s work of getting married, building a home, establishing a career and raising a family are futile activities if God is not the foundation. A family without God can never experience the bond of love that God brings to our relationships. Make God your highest priority and let Him do the building! His structure will stand the test of time and will last for eternity.

**Read Psalm 128, Living Bible.** This has been called the marriage prayer because it was often sung at Israelite marriages. God is the true head of our homes. A good family life is the reward for following God. God’s Word carefully outlines good family values: love, honesty, integrity, serving one another and prayer. Pray with your children and pray for your children. The results are eternal – you will take your family relationships with you to heaven!

So we have seen the idyllic family life and the wonderful potential results of raising our children to fear and honor the Lord. But what about those Father’s – and mother’s – whose hearts have been broken by their children’s rebellion? You have sacrificed your life unselfishly, you have been a good and loving father, but your child is right now far from God. **First, never give up on them.** God hasn’t so why would you? No matter how difficult their struggle is, as long as they are alive God can change them. They are closer to serving God than you may think. We have all heard of the effectiveness of a mother’s prayers. I am sure that my mother’s and father’s prayers turned my life around at the age of 29. How else could God have broken through the satanic fog surrounding me, while I was in the drunk tank? The Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, how old will you be before you change? 39, 49, 59? Just like that. 6 months later I was on my knees with my wife and children asking Jesus into our lives. What great rejoicing in our entire family!

**Second, pray for your wandering children**. Many times that is the only thing you can do for them. But it is always the best thing to do, and it doesn’t cost anything but your time – it is worth the tears. God is on the throne and in control. Your power and influence is limited, so walk away from your own efforts long enough to ask Him to exercise His omnipotence – His great power and influence – to do what is best in your child’s life.

It is God who gave you the job of being Dad and Grandpa and it is God who will give you your final job evaluation. It is His approval that matters the most. Look forward to hearing Him say to you some day, **‘Well done my good and faithful** **servant, enter into the joys I have prepared for you and your children.’** Millions of years from now, your children, your grandchildren and possibly generations to come should the Lord tarry, will sit by you at the King’s table, thanking you and thanking God for you!