

970615AM FATHERS DAY JOSEPH
"GODLY DADS IN A DAY WHEN PAPAS MISSING"

JOSEPH:
FATHER OF JAMES AND JESUS

JAMES SERIES 59-4

Papas Missing

Just before her death in the eighties one of America's best known faces Lucille Ball, was interviewed by Merv Griffin. He asked her a very insightful question, "Lucille, you've lived a long time on this earth and are a wise person. What's happened to our country? What's wrong with our children? Why are our families falling apart? What's missing?" Without any hesitation she replied, "Papas missing!" Lucille continued, "Things are falling apart because Papas gone. If Papa were here, he would fix it!"

Is that true? Listen to the world; they have taken note of it. Marion Levy in her societal critique has written, "For the first time in the history of humankind the overwhelming majority of little boys and little girls continued under the direct domination and supervision of ladies until they reached maturity. This has never happened before in history. Crusades, wars, migrations, pestilence - nothing for a people as a whole ever before took so large a percentage of young adult and older adult males out of the family context for so much of the waking time of the children. Most of us have not even noticed the change, nor do we have any idea of its radicality."¹

How bad is it? U.S. News and World Report states these facts: 1 in 4 children born have no father to welcome them at birth. Only 40% of children grow up in 2 parent families. A million children each year go through divorce, 9 out of 10 will stay with their mothers. And when he is present a normal dad gives his children only 3 minutes of time to them with his undivided attention!

GODLY DADS:

1. know their job is important but their home is essential
2. express deep love for their wives but always save some for their children
3. pay attention and respond to their children but even more to God

Often bouquets are thrown to moms on Mother's Day and dads get a shot between the eyes on Fathers Day. Amazingly every one of the 27 references to fathers in Proverbs is POSITIVE! And, when we get to the New Testament the pattern continues. A model dad

¹ Piper, Where's Dad, p. 9.

is Joseph. Everything we see him do is right on. If you are a dad, follow his lead. If you want to be a dad, listen up and learn. If your children are grown, listen and share. Let's all commit to be fathers of the Word !

Joseph

1. GODLY DADS LIKE JOSEPH ARE FULL OF COMPASSION. MATTHEW 1: 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just [man,] and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. (NKJV) he planned to put away Mary privately
2. GODLY DADS LIKE JOSEPH LISTEN TO GOD MATTHEW 1: 20-24 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." 22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." 24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, (NKJV)
3. GODLY DADS LIKE JOSEPH STAY IN TOUCH WITH GOD MATTHEW 2: 13-19 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." 14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, 15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: 18 "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping [for] her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more." 19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, (NKJV)
4. GODLY DADS LIKE JOSEPH DEMONSTRATE LOVE TO THEIR FAMILIES. MATTHEW 2: 13-16 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." 14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, 15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. (NKJV) Joseph was a leader in Caring. He was a protector of his family: he made decisions for the future of his family going to Egypt.

5. GODLY DADS LIKE JOSEPH WORK HARD TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR FAMILIES. MATTHEW 2: 19 After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt 20 and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead." 21 So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, 23 and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene." (NIV) Joseph was a leader in God's order for the home. He was a provider: he went to Nazareth and worked. Proverbs 19:14 Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD. (NIV); Proverbs 13:22 A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous. (NIV)
6. GODLY DADS LIKE JOSEPH GIVE THEIR CHILDREN LESSONS IN LIVING. MARK 6:3 "Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" And they were offended at Him. (NKJV). He was a modeler: Taught Jesus his trade and that took time side by side Mowing, driving, care for the car, finances, etc. Men just put some time in them each week.
7. GODLY DADS LIKE JOSEPH FOLLOW GOD'S WORD FOR RAISING CHILDREN LUKE 2:27-33 So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, 28 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: 29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to [bring] revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel." 33 And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. (NKJV)
8. GODLY DADS LIKE JOSEPH LEAD THEIR FAMILY IN WORSHIP. LUKE 2:41 His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. (NKJV) He was a worshiper, he took them to the feast Joseph was a leader in godliness. He was a Maintainer: Pr. 22.28 keep family boundaries
9. GODLY DADS LIKE JOSEPH SEE CHILDREN AS THE LORD DOES! he had 7 children, he loved his wife and family and paid the price for them! Mark 6:3 "Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" And they were offended at Him. (NKJV) Children are an eternal blessing. Children are gifts from the Lord. Children are a reward from the Lord. Psalm 127: 3 Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him. 4 Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. 5 Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate. (NIV)

Having children limits: toys (boats, off road vehicles, fancy cars, exotic vacations, excessive sports, discretionary spending), time, flexibility, mobility. . . it diminishes financial savings, it takes a great deal of emotional and spiritual energy. But it is one of the only investments you can enjoy both here and in heaven. It provides one of the only investments that will honor you here and in heaven. Children are a direct physical, visible, tangible blessing from the Lord. Children are unique because they are your very own plus they are brothers and sisters in Christ plus best friends for life. Nothing is more

precious as the years pass than to see your children following Christ. Nothing is more heart-rending than to not see them follow Him. In the world today there is a myth that children are expensive. The truth is they are rich and precious treasures sent from God Himself. Happy is anyone who has many! In an age characterized by 2 Timothy 3:2-4: People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God -- (NIV)

THE POWER OF THE FATHER IN PAUL'S DAY

In Paul's day, certain attitudes existed that made life perilous for children. One of these was a Roman law called the *patria potestas*, which literally meant "the father's power." This particular law allowed the father to have absolute power over every single member of his family. For example, he could sell them all as slaves; he could make them work in his fields in chains; and he could even take the law into his own hands and punish any member of his family as severely as he wanted, even to the point of inflicting the death penalty. And he had that power as long as he lived. When a child was born, for example, the child was taken and placed between the feet of the father. If the father reached down and picked up the child, the child stayed in the home. But, if the father turned and walked away, the child was literally thrown away.

A letter of 1 B.C. from a man named Hilarion to his wife, Alis, gives us some insight into how children were viewed. It says, "Hilarion to Alis his wife, heartiest greetings. Know that we are still, even now, in Alexandria. Do not worry if when all others return, I remain in Alexandria. I beg and beseech you to take care of the little child, and as soon as we receive wages, I send them to you. If---good luck to you---you have another child, if it is a boy, let it live; if it is a girl, expose it" (Papyri Oxyrhynchus IV, 744).

Seneca, a philosopher during the Roman Empire, said, "We slaughter a fierce ox, we strangle a mad dog, we plunge a knife into a sick cow, and children who are born weakly and deformed, we drown."

When children were thrown out by their parents, they would often be taken, if they were still alive, and left in the forum. People would then come by at night and collect the boys to nourish them and make them slaves, and the girls to raise as prostitutes.

So, Paul was speaking to a world where the children were severely abused. The parent-child relationship was a sick as it is in our society--and by the way, no worse!

Five Positive Attributes of a Good Father A Godly Dad is...

- I. PREPARE HIM FOR LIFE ! 1 Thessalonians 2:8 So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. (NKJV)

- A. This concept is the compass for determining your child's moral compass. A pastor from the SF Bay area wrote², "Homosexuals are not born, they are made." His ministry to homosexuals, some tragically from Christian homes discovered a thread in all their lives. The Father's love as commanded here and especially in Ephesians 6:4, provides the God-given guide for those children to find their orientation. Is it a choice, yes. Is it their personal responsibility before God? Yes. But do we as parents have a responsibility? Yes, and if we drive them away by our sin, it is a shared responsibility. This Pastor goes on to say³, "Either the father was passive and the mother was dominant, or the father was so hard and brutal that the boy was driven away to identify solely with the tenderness and warmth of his mother. Somewhere the compass malfunctioned."
- B. What are four landmarks of a loving father? What marks out the region we must guard? Let me briefly trace them:
1. Fathers must be FAIR Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (NIV). How are we as dads unfair at times? The great reformed bible teacher William Hendriksen⁴ suggests at least six ways fathers embitter their children:
 - a) Beware of Overprotection. Let the boys be boys, not little girls. They need to run, climb, get scraped and explore or they will not develop into the leader and protector they must become.
 - b) Beware of Favoritism. Look at Esau and Jacob's mom Rebecca, then Jacob and his doting on Joseph. It embittered those around.
 - c) Beware of Discouragement. If we always say they will never amount to anything, they might believe us. If we say you are a pain, they will feel it.
 - d) Beware of destroying Individuality. God has made and gifted each of his children uniquely, as spiritual snowflakes. Don't make clones of yourself, let God make them as He plans.
 - e) Beware of Neglect. Spend time with them. Put the work or TV to bed early and spend special and long times with those fast passing childhood days.
 - f) Beware of Bitter Words and outright physical Cruelty. Don't abuse them verbally or physically. That means do not correct them in anger. James 1:20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (NKJV)
 2. Fathers must be TENDER. Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up [this word means⁵ "to nourish, to provide for with tender care"] in the training and admonition of the Lord. (NKJV). Here are a few practical application of this idea:

² Steve Farrar, Point Man, Multnomah, p. 202.

³ Ibid., p. 203.

⁴ NTC, Ephesians, p. 261.

⁵ Reinecker, p.540.

- a) *Listen to them before you spank them⁶, so they know their feeling are important.*
 - b) Apologize to them when you have been wrong, harsh, angry or negligent.
 - c) Accept the concerns, constructive criticism and ideas your wife offers. And, put them in practice.
 - d) Be a hugger, holder, encourager and friend. And, spread it onto mom to, not just the children.
3. Fathers must be FIRM. Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training [this word is neat⁷, it "may be described as training by means of rules and regulations, rewards, and when necessary, punishments. It refers primarily to what is done to the child."] and admonition [by contrast this word means "training by means of the spoken word, whether that be teaching, warning, or encouragement. It refers primarily to what is said to the child."] of the Lord. (NKJV) Years back when members of Britain's Royal Family toured the US they were asked to share the most amazing thing they had observed in America. Without a moment of hesitation the reporter was told, "The Way the parents obey their children."⁸ Listen to Ken Taylor⁹ whose Living Bible paraphrase has touched so many lives:

A Father's task is many sided, but the most important part of his work is to fit himself and his family into God's plan of family authority. Children are to be encouraged by the fathers pat on the back. And, helped to better things when necessary by the application of the hand or stick to the seat of learning. of course there are other methods of discipline besides spanking, but whatever is called for must be used. To refuse to discipline a child is to refuse the clear command of God. A child who does not learn to obey both parents will find it much harder to learn to obey God."

God said if your home is not in order you may not lead in the church 1 Timothy 3:4-5 one who rules his own house well, having [his] children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); (NKJV)

- 4. Fathers must be CHRISTLIKE. Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition *of the Lord.* (NKJV)

II. *Genuine Living in the World* 1 Thessalonians 2:8b So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. (NKJV) We are here on earth for better or worse, why not spend the days of our pilgrimage for the glory of

⁶ Farrar, p. 211.

⁷ Hendriksen, p. 62.

⁸ Farrar, p.216.

⁹ Quotable Quotations, Victor, 1985.

God. We as dads need to lead the way in how to live among this sinful and fallen race in a godly way. Chuck Swindoll notes some temptations we as dads must by God's grace resist. These are great, you need to write them down:

- A. **Material Possessions.** We must provide for our family or as 1 Timothy 5:8 says "if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (NKJV) However the temptation is **TO SUBSTITUTE WHAT YOU PURCHASE FOR YOUR FAMILY FOR YOUR PRESENCE WITH YOUR FAMILY.** In other words, Toys instead of Time. That means nights at the office, endless travel, weekends working...no gift can replace your presence. Ask them what they remember about growing up. It won't be the label on their clothing. It will be father son or daughter breakfasts, trips to the zoo, park or games. It will be the nights you waited up for them, the games you cheered them and the hours you coached them in the back yard or workshop. Give them time with you. That's what they want and need.
- B. **Emotional Strength.** We are daily tempted to **SAVE OUR BEST FOR THE WORKPLACE AND GIVE OUR FAMILIES THE LEFTOVERS.** Are you like a jet at the airport? You exercise, refuel and taxi out of the hangar to fly to work full of energy and ideas all day, only to run low on fuel as you land and taxi into your recliner to shut down for the day? Where are you investing your life? In things that won't matter in a hundred years? Be careful.
- C. **Verbal Communication.** We often fall into the trap as dads of starting to **DELIVER LECTURES RATHER THAN EARNING THE RIGHT TO BE RESPECTED THROUGH LISTENING AND LEARNING.** Remember James 1:19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; (NKJV)
- D. **Personal Achievement.** This is such a subtle temptation to some of us dads. We have fallen into the wrong pattern of **DESIRING TO BE PERFECT AND DEMANDING THE SAME FROM THE REST OF OUR FAMILY.** It is when nothing is ever good enough. Tom Eisenman¹⁰ describes some of the tendencies of men who are perfectionists:
 1. Perfectionists tend to think in dichotomous categories. Everything is either great or bad, perfect or worthless.
 2. Perfectionists also engage in minimizing or maximizing. Failures are maximized and successes are minimized. The small thing that went wrong destroys or at least overshadows everything else.
 3. Perfectionists set unreasonable goals for themselves and others.
 4. Perfectionists judge their personal worth by their performance, and others by the same standard.

We must realize that God is a God of the second chance. We are sinners. All of us fail Him and others and we must get right with Him and them, and go on. Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all [points] tempted as [we are, yet] without sin. (NKJV)

- E. **Sexual Drive.** This is the fifth area of living in this wicked world we must guard. This is the temptation to **SEEK INTIMATE SATISFACTION OUTSIDE**

¹⁰ Temptations Men Face, IVP, 1990, pp. 168-70.

THE BONDS OF MONOGAMY. Simply it means to seek and find sensual satisfaction in reading, seeking, listening, imagining or even experiencing any woman other than your wife. James 1:13-15 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (NKJV). Don't give in, even for a fleeting peek, a lustful glance, a quick peek in the magazine, a moment on the movie channel, or a meeting with a woman. Flee, say no and don't look back. It often helps to take reminders of your family with you to work. look at their smiling faces in pictures on business trips, put them around your office or work area, talk about your wife as your sweetheart and best friend to your coworkers, especially if they are women. And most of all remember the lives of your family rest in your care.

- F. Spiritual Faith. The final area we are tempted in is TO UNDER-ESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTIVATING YOUR FAMILY'S SPIRITUAL APPETITE. You must lead the way to the Word, church, prayer meeting, verse memorization. the children should see dad praying, reading, witnessing, serving in the Lord's work, helping the helpless, sacrificing resources to invest in eternity, resisting worldliness and pride. All those area are caught more than taught.

III. *Genuine Laboring* 1 Thessalonians 2:9 For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. (NKJV) Although Paul is talking about tent making to support himself, the element here we need to look at is he gave them what they needed to hear at any cost. Dads, have you given your children what they need to make it in life, even at great personal cost to your work goals, athletic desires and even personal free time? What are the essentials we must work at. Lets just trace some children who made it out in the world that are described in the OT, and be sure we are similarly equipping them.

- A. SCHOOLING TODAY. Every summer ends with the weary masses of families in the fall frenzy of preparation for school. The clothes, supplies, books and all that goes with education. For the fifty-plus millions of public school children, it is veritable jungle of penetrating caustic errors, virulent moral infections, twisted historical analyses of the past, often scathing public attacks on traditional biblical values and living. They are confronted with:
1. Sex education that is actually pushing them to lust building and self gratification.
 2. Self actualization training that seeks them to learn self worship.
 3. Meditation and relaxation techniques that are only thinly veneered Eastern Occultic and New Age arts.
 4. School buildings that host peer pressures of highest magnitude, violence that terrifies and often plants lifelong fears, exposure to drugs, pornography and rock lyrics that are nearly indelible in their staining capacity.

Then there are those who are going to Christian schools that face just as much preparation pressures to get them ready and get them there, as well as the added pressure of paying the tuition. But even Christian Schools are not safe from so many potential dangers.

- a) There are potential doctrinal errors from new or ungrounded faculty members.
- b) There are serious dangers of:
 - spiritual elitism "I go to CHRISTIAN School";
 - legalism or externalism "They don't have our standards, so they aren't spiritual, Christians, etc.;"
 - spiritual apathy "another chapel speaker, verse to memorize, etc.;"
 - worst of all spiritual fakes "learned the ropes, do what told, never experienced the truth, living on mom and dads or he teachers experience of Christ.

And finally, and not least of all, there are the homeschoolers. They have the challenges of time, space, finances, criticism and misunderstanding as well as legal threats from an often hostile government. Their pressures are no more nor less, They face dangers equally as deadly as the other groups. Have you thought of these?

- Isolationists: being not merely insulated from the world but so isolated we can't even relate let alone be as Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all [men,] that I might by all means save some. (NKJV) Matthew 11:19 "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children." (NKJV) Is your homeschooling preparing soldiers for the Gospel Army or is it handicapping them from serving a needy world for Christ?
- Exclusivists: believing my way, our way is the only right way. And with it the danger of elevating my hero, my pastor, my seminar leader, my curriculum developer, my spiritual mentor, my bible teacher to an ungodly pedestal. 1 Corinthians 1:11-13 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's [household,] that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? (NKJV) Is your homeschooling divisive or edifying to other Christians?

B. Without a doubt, the biblical context of education was the home. The portrait in Deuteronomy was a teaching home. The setting of the wisdom literature and especially Proverbs is a father and mother educating their children. Historically the OT synagogue and NT church only supplemented what was

already learned at home. However, if because of the collapse of the family, the economic conditions of today, and the outside demands on our families, what must parents be sure their children know, however they are taught reading, writing and arithmetic? Let's examine three OT saints educated outside the home. The elements they learned should be the mandate for us. They were ready for the world and survived it. And isn't that our goal? Not just to have the finest young saints at home but wherever they go?

1. There is a place in Scripture for some to be taught outside the home.
 - a) Young Samuel in I Samuel 1 was raised and taught in the tabernacle of God. This was much like our Christian Schools of today perhaps. Was it safe? No. Meet fellow students - Eli the teachers sons, Hophni and Phinehas. 1 Samuel 2:12 Now the sons of Eli [were] corrupt; they did not know the LORD. (NKJV) As we well know they were driven by their lusts and immoral v. 15-17, 22. But inspite of the evil peer pressure 1 Samuel 2:21 And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile the child Samuel grew before the LORD. (NKJV)
 - b) Probably Teenaged Daniel

IV. *Genuine Living in Christ* 1 Thessalonians 2:10 You [are] witnesses, and God [also,] how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; (NKJV). This is just plain old transparency that is so hard for us men. I read something an unsaved columnist¹¹ wrote once that challenged me to be a transparent dad to my children. Listen:

After concluding his speech to generous applause, columnist D.L. Stewart drove home with his impressed fourteen-year-old son.

I really admire

V. SPEAK ENCOURAGING WORDS! 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father [does] his own children, 12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. (NKJV) One author¹² on the family has noted that in the average home surveyed, there are ten negative words for every positive word spoken. What kind of words are we using dads? Are they healthy and wholesome to build up our children? Ephesians 4:29-32 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you. (NKJV) Or are they destroying your child from the inside out?

A. A few years back newspaper writer Mark Patinken¹³ wrote a funny yet piercing article about the ways dads often talk to their children. He entitled it, "You're grounded - and other Dadisms".

¹¹ D. L. Stewart, "Why fathers hide their feelings", Redbook, January, 1985, p.32.

¹² Dan Benson, The Total Man, p. 183.

¹³ Fort Worth Star-Telegram, October 13, 1985, p.6C.

There's a ...book out filled with 80 pages of the one liners your mother used to tell you. It's called *Momilies*. You'd probably recognize most of it. For example:

"Sit up straight."

"Don't cross your eyes or they will freeze that way."

"If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all."

It got me thinking about the things fathers used to say. They usually carried a different tone. What follow are a few Dadisms:

- I will break every bone in your head.
- I will break every bone in your body.
- Because I'm your father, that's why...
- When I was a boy...
- ...I used to walk eight miles to school every morning...
-after finishing my chores...
- You want your allowance, you know where the mower is.
- How'd you like to spend the rest of the summer in your room?
- You call that hair combed?
- Talk to your mother.
- Is that any way to talk to your mother?
- You want something to cry about? I'll give you something to cry about....
- Douglas, I mean Hugh, I mean Matthew... whatever your name is... come here.
- Now.

GROWING DADS # 6

What a wonderful day to be together, Father's Day. I don't know about your family, but there was a lot of activity, a lot of whispering and scampering around. And Bonnie said, now honey, there's lots going on last night and this morning. She said, just act like you don't notice it, and so I acted like I didn't notice it, but it's kind of hard. But what a wonderful day. But even more than that, what a wonderful day to come into the presence of the Lord and to focus on one of the great, great parts of life. And that is something that all of us have. Again, as I said on Mother's Day it's neat to be involved in something that totally touches everyone. And we all have a father. Some of us are fathers, some of us may be fathers in the future, some of us perhaps remember fathers that are passed. But one thing for sure, we all had one.

And the Bible says a lot about fathers. And we're looking and just for those of you, you come in at different times, I want to explain to you where we are. We're studying the book of James, but we're not going to look at James at all this morning, but we're studying the book of James. And we're looking at the first family of the New Testament literally because Joseph and Mary are related to all the key figures, you know? John the Baptist, and Elizabeth and Zechariah, the parents of John the Baptist, and Simeon and Anna came to Joseph and Mary at the birth of Christ. And of course our Lord Jesus Christ grew up in their home, and Joseph was the stepfather of Christ. And then two of the great pillars of the New Testament church were in their family. James pastored the church of Jerusalem, James wrote the little book of James, and Jude wrote the book of Jude, and so what a wonderful first family we're looking at. And this morning we're going to focus specifically on Joseph - Joseph the father of James and also the step-earthly-father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You want to open with me to the book of Matthew. We're going to look at Matthew and then at Mark and then at Luke. And what we're going to distill out is some truths about Joseph as a godly father. And this is the context, and what I want you to see this morning and this is the direction I'm going to come, I want you to see a godly father in Joseph and what a godly father does, and I want you to see it in this context.

And the context I think was best spoken by one of the best known faces on television. Just before she died in the 80's, Lucille Ball, whom my children just love Lucy. They think that's, I mean, as long as your kids love that on TV, let 'em watch TV, okay? If they think Lucy's the great thing, leave the TV on. As soon as they don't like Lucy, watch out. But you know what I mean? That's a good barometer. But Lucille Ball was interviewed just before her death by Merv Griffin. And it's interesting it seemed like those two kind of like institutions on television were very different at that interview. They almost were talking like real people. They were almost down into the real world instead of into acting or off into something that isn't valuable to even consider. And I want to read you the transcript, a little bit of it, of the just-before-her-death interviews, as one of America's best-known faces, Lucille Ball, was interviewed by Griffin. He asked her a very insightful question to begin the interview. Looking over at her, as the television cameras caught both of their faces and caught the expressions on it, with seeming concern and compassion Merv Griffin said, "Lucille, you have lived a long time on this earth. You are a wise person. What's happened to our country? What's wrong with our children? Why is everything falling apart? Why are the families on the rocks? What's missing?" And without any hesitation, Lucille Ball looked up with her penetrating, glistening eyes and looked right at the camera and she said, "Oh that's simple. Papa's missing. Papa's missing." She said, "If Papa were here, he would solve everything."

But in America, Papa is missing. It's amazing if you look at the statistics, and listen to the people in the world, not the church, if you just listen to the people in the world, they've taken note of Lucille Ball's penetrating insight. Mary Levy, a social writer, one who critiques society, a secularist from a major university, said this, "For the first time in the history of humankind." And that's interesting that a university professor would make such a sweeping statement, but this was her social commentary on America in this past decade. "For the first time in the history of humankind, the overwhelming majority of our little boys and little girls continued under the direct domination and supervision of ladies until they reached maturity." Is that bad, Ms. Levy? Well, she says, "This has never happened before in the history of the planet. During the crusades, during wars, during migrations, under pestilence, nothing, for a people as a whole, has ever taken such a large percentage of young adults and older adult males out of the family context for so much of their waking time of their lives." What she's saying is even the crusades where the men all marched off and even great times of pestilence when the men died or wars when they're off fighting, never even in those times were children so absolutely relegated under the dominion and supervision of women rather than being under men and male supervision. Taking the males out of the context of a masculine oversight for their waking time has caused a drastic change in our society. She concludes with this sentence. "Most of us have not even noticed the change, nor do we have any idea of its radicality." She said it has a radical effect on our culture and she said you're seeing our culture disintegrate because Papa is missing.

Well, we're going to look at what the Bible says about that, but U.S. News and World Report says it in the kind of terms we can relate to from our culture. One in four children as they're born into America everyday had no father to welcome them at birth. Forty percent of children grow up with a two parent home. Sixty percent grow up with a single parent home. So we're talking about only 40% of our families are a traditional father and mother home kind of family. Each year through divorce, nine out of ten of those children that are involved in divorce stay with their mother. And we have a million children. Nine hundred thousand of them are taken out of a father and mother setting and they go to a mother only setting, and 100,000 go to be with the father. And when this is present, the normal dad, you know when there's a normal family, the normal dad only gives his children three to six minutes of undivided time a day. I heard that on the news coming home from church Wednesday night. It said the same thing. It was a Father's Day announcement. And they said, did you know, on ABC News, that the normal father only gives his kids, a good one, six minutes a day?

Well, what are godly fathers like? Godly fathers know that their job is important but their home is essential. Godly fathers express deep love for their wives but they always save some love to pour out and lavish on their children. Godly fathers pay attention and respond to their children but they respond even more, spend time with them and respond even more to God. That's what a godly father is. He's not perfect. But I think it's interesting that the book of Proverbs, which is always a real source of insight on fathers, the book of Proverbs has 27 passages that mention dads. Did you know that every one of them is positive? Every one of them. Twenty-seven for 27. You see, a father is such a crucial and such a vital role that God, all He does in his word is encourage and encourage and encourage men to be what He designed them to be. And what a blessing! Well, let's just see how one was designed.

We're going to start in Matthew one in verse 19. Because often bouquets are thrown to moms on Mother's Day but dads get kind of a shot between the eyes on Father's Day, right? In fact, I heard a few people say, as soon as this Mother's Day deal is over, we're going to stay out for a couple of weeks because I don't know if we can take the dads getting worked over. Well, we're going to get to look at a model dad. His name is Joseph. And every thing we see him do is right on. And if you're a dad, you need to follow Joseph's lead through the scriptures by the power of the Spirit. If you want to be a dad, you should listen up and learn, maybe mark some of these in your Bible. And if your

children are grown, you ought to listen and share these insights with them. Because all of us who are fathers or potential fathers need to commit to be godly dads. And unlike Lucille Ball, we don't want to be missing. We want to be vitally involved. Chapter one verse 19. I'll read it in Matthew. It says this, "And Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly."

What's going on? Well, you know from verse 18 that Mary had been betrothed to Joseph. And before they came together, she was found to be expecting a baby. Now Joseph knew he had nothing to do with it and he knew of her virtue, and so he didn't know how it happened. But he did know one thing. His heart was filled with such compassion that he didn't want to make a spectacle of her. And the first point I see which is a factor in Joseph's life is that godly dads like Joseph 1) are full of compassion. Now, godly dads have to do hard stuff. They have to discipline, they have to admonish, they have to instruct. They have to spank their children at times, they have to be involved in their lives. But a godly father, like Joseph will always be filled with compassion. Now, what I think is interesting is remember this family with seven kids that Christ was a part of? James and Jude were not believers. They went through all of their, Joseph and Mary's upbringing, they went through all the years of the synagogue and all. And yes, they were good and religious, and yes, they went to synagogue and everything else, but when the Messiah himself showed himself, their hearts hardened to the gospel and they turned and they scoffed and they mocked. And we learned about this several weeks ago, especially in James' life. He would rather have had Christ dead than be the Savior of the world. Now you think, how did, how did they turn out to be such great church leaders? How did they not get warped? Well, I think I see an element here in verse 19 of chapter one. Joseph was full of compassion. Joseph knew what was going on. He knew that God had spoken through an angel to his wife. He knew that God had spoken to him and we're going to see in just a moment, God spoke to him throughout his life. And he helped him lead and guide his family. And he was sensitive to that. But underneath all that, there was a tender heart. And I think that's something we need to have if we're going to succeed. As Tim read in his devotional, fathers should have that tenderness and not exasperate their children.

Well, secondly, verse 20, and I'll read 20 through 24 of Matthew one. "But when he considered this, behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit, and she'll bore a son and you,'" you, leader of the family, you, husband and father, you " 'will call his name Jesus.' " You will be the one that testifies to the fact of who this is born into your family, born through your wife. ' "For it is He who will save His people from their sins.' Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled saying: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which translated means God with us. And Joseph arose from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and he took her as his wife." Point number two. Godly dads, number one, are full of compassion. 2) Godly dads respond to the word of God. I mean, they respond to it. Joseph, you know what he could have done, he could have said, wow, that was really a great insight. I'm going to think about that for awhile and put it away and gone merrily on his way with his plans. Do you know what? He responded. He interacted, he looked the word of God full in the face as he saw the angel of the Lord in his dream, and he said, yes to the Lord. And what I think is fascinating is that Joseph had learned early in his life to listen to God and at this critical moment, Joseph listened to God. He listened responsively to God.

Did you know our children watch and watch and watch and watch. Let's show them the right things. Let's be listening to God. And when a critical time comes, when a disappointing time comes, when a tragic, when a sorrow-filled or when a joy-filled or when an exuberant time comes, listen to God and have his response.

It's a wonderful thing, dads, to study your Bible, our Bibles, so that we can be ready. I mean, you already know the events that are coming up. You know the holidays, I mean they're the same every year. You know that there's going to be birthdays. You know that there're going to be deaths in the family. You know that there are going to be transitions in the family, you know that there are going to be levels as the children grow and expand in their world and launch out. You know those. I mean, it's kind of like we're all on the same journey as John was singing about this morning. So, why not prepare for those? Why not for the birthdays have scripture and say, I'd like to give you, as your father, a birthday verse. Why not for the holidays say, just before we eat this meal, let me read to you what God says at Thanksgiving we ought to read. At Christmas, instead of mom always being the one, right, that's hustling around, dad saying, okay, children, while mom's doing that, let's all gather around. Let me read to you again or you read with your Bibles. See? Fathers listen to God and they show that. They show that they're listening to God. And they even show the children how they can also be listening to God.

Well, look at chapter two with me, please, of Matthew, because I want to show you a third facet of what godly dads look like. Chapter two and Joseph was that godly father. And in verse 13, the third point is we learn that godly dads like Joseph stay in touch with God. They don't listen to Him, they not only listen and respond at one time, but they keep on staying in touch with God. They make it their desire to stay in touch with God. This is the flight to Egypt and I'll read verses 13 down through verse 19. "Now when they had departed, behold an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream saying, 'Arise. Take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt and there remain until I tell you. For Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.' "

Now just for a second, think about how comforting this is. Have you ever thought that God knows about the disasters and the dangers in life before we do? He knows them all. Did you catch that? God knew what this king was going to do. God knew. And in fact, He knew so long ago it was written in the scriptures, verse 15, he was there 'till the death of Herod, the family was, that that which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled saying, 'Out of Egypt I did call my son.' That's in the book of Hosea. Hosea was written 600 years before Christ was born, and God knew 600 years before Joseph got on the scene that Joseph was going to have to stay in touch with him because danger was coming. And if God knows about danger 600 years ahead, He knows about the dangers in our lives, too.

And have you ever thought about the value of staying sensitively in touch with God to guide your family? That's why it's so important. You can know when danger is coming. God will, through His word, through His spirit, as the apostle Paul says, that we would have the Holy Spirit as the referee, the one that blows the whistle. The peace of God will keep our hearts and minds. The scriptures say that if we would hearken to God, our peace would be like a river, our righteousness like the waves of the sea. That He would keep us in perfect peace if we would stay our minds on Him, Isaiah 26:3. And as we do that, if there's anything that's going to sever that perfect peace, we pull away from it. And that's how we avoid danger.

So, Joseph was a godly dad and he stayed in touch with God. And it says, in this passage as I continue reading in verse 16, "Then Herod saw that he'd been tricked by the magi. He was enraged and he sent," and here comes the danger God knew about, "he slew all the male children which were in Bethlehem and all of its environs, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had had ascertained from the magi. Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled, saying: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning. Rachel, weeping for her children, she refused to be comforted.'" Look at verse 19. "But when Herod was dead, behold, an

angel of the Lord.” Third one. Boy, he’s staying in touch. “Appeared in a dream to Joseph and told him what to do next.” Fathers, godly dads, like Joseph, stay sensitive to God. When you read your Bible, you’re not just reading it for you, you’re not just reading it for you and your wife, you’re reading it for you and your wife and your family. And stay sensitive and share what God teaches you.

But, let’s continue because I want to back up to verse 13 and show you a fourth point. Number one is godly dads like Joseph are full of compassion; 2) godly dads like Joseph listen to god; 3) godly dads like Joseph keep listening to God, they stay in touch with Him; but, 4) godly dads like Joseph demonstrate their love to their family. You say, what? Yeah. A father is to be an example, a beacon actually. And in our series next Sunday, Lord willing, I’m going to share more about fatherhood and parenting. But the studies have shown, and again the secular studies have shown that in a home where the father is not the right beacon showing love, that there is higher and very dangerous incidences of sexual disorientation. If you look at the homosexual children, you will see a disorientation. Either they had the harsh father. Now, you don’t blame the father, and you don’t say, oh, it’s his fault, you know? People make choices. And among them, homosexuality is a choice. It’s not genetic and it’s not a disease and it’s not, you know... It’s a choice. But, there are contributing factors to it. There are things that help it grow. Kind of like weeds, you know? You can contribute to their growth by now spraying them. You know what I mean? You cannot inhibit them and it will contribute to their growth. And a godly dad doesn’t contribute to sexual disorientation. Rather, he fourthly demonstrates his love to his family.

Look at verse 13 and think through this from a loving context of chapter two of Matthew. “When he departed, behold an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and said, ‘Arise. Take the young child and flee.’” And you know how he demonstrated his love? Verse 14, he arose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. I mean, he didn’t say, well, wait a minute, what about my career? You know? What about, I’ve got, you know, I’ve got Jesus all signed up in little league. I don’t know if I want to go so quick. You know, I’ve got a lot to do here and, you know? No, God said it, I’ll do it. Do you see how he demonstrated his love? He demonstrated his love by obedience. He demonstrated his love by instant obedience to God’s first... God didn’t have to send that angel six nights in a row. He didn’t have to accompany with a thunderstorm or something or a meteor shower. Joseph just said, I am sensitive to God. If God says, go to Egypt, go to Egypt? That’s a big country. It’s a fearful country, deep in the occult. He said, I’ll go. I mean, if God says it, I’ll go. And he went.

And Joseph was a leader in caring. He was a protector of his family. He made decisions for the future of his family by going to Egypt. I mean, can you imagine in the modern American family what would happen? Joseph would have woken up that next morning and said, oh, honey. I had a dream. And angel told me we should go to Egypt. I don’t want to go. So the mother would have done it. She would have said, oh, it’s dangerous. We’ve got to go. Come on, come on, come on. That’s the American family. The mother leaves and the father says, okay, if we have to go, I’ll go. And they just passively follow. But Joseph demonstrated his love to his family by caring for them enough to obey God. And I hope that’s what you have. That’s what I want in my life.

Look at verse 19. And I’ll read 19 on because fifthly, godly dads like Joseph work hard to provide for their families. Now that’s a lost art. Isn’t it? Hard work. Hard work.

I mean it’s almost like, I remember when I was in high school that we had a quiz in history and all the young people thought manual labor was the president of Mexico. I mean, they had never heard of the idea of hard work. I mean, it’s just, I mean, pinball... Boy that dates me, video arcades and stuff like that, but not work! I mean, they look for everything. They wanted grants and scholarship. Get a job! Are you kidding?

And no, godly dads like Joseph work hard to provide for their families and I think it's fascinating what Joseph chooses. I mean, he could have said, Lord, could you send a few more wise men with some gifts, you know? I'm not sure... I've got to raise Jesus, you know? It's important. No, it says in verse 19, after Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in Egypt and said, get up. Take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel. You see, when they went to Egypt, they probably didn't have work permits or whatever they had back then. And so that's why the wise men came and dumped all these treasures on 'em. They got enough, more than enough, to make the trip, to live for a couple of years and to make it back. See, God provides.

God always provides for what we can't do. He doesn't provide for what we can do. Think about that. You know, when school starts in the fall and you have to study. You can pray all day that you get an "A" on the test, but if you don't study, you won't. You can pray all day that you get the job and it won't be brought to you. You have to do your part. God does his part. God's part was he warned 'em, he provided, he directed 'em and they had to act.

But take the child, verse 20, and his mother and go to the land of Israel. For those who were trying to take the child's life are dead. So he got up, took the child, verse 21, and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in the place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, having been warned in a dream.

Here's another dream. See? I mean, the Lord just keeps leading him. He withdrew to the district of Galilee. Do you see how the Lord, the Lord did not give him a map. The Lord let him discern his will. Do you see that? He told them to go to Egypt specifically, but he says, now go back to Israel, but he didn't tell 'em where to go. But He led him through his sensitivity to the Lord through him making wise decisions with the knowledge he had. He withdrew to the districts of Galilee, verse 23, he went up and lived in a town called Nazareth and by that successive doing the will of God step-by-step, he fulfills the will of God. And look what it says, and so was fulfilled what was said through the prophets. He will be called a Nazarene. Joseph fulfilled the word of God by him making conscious, proper decisions. He didn't get some supernatural revelations. "GO TO NAZARETH!" God led him and I think that's such a beautiful picture of us doing God's will. Ninety-nine percent of the will of God is already in the Bible. All Joseph had to do is just take care of his family and come up and use some common sense to not be around the son of the killer. And so where else could he go? And he went up in to Galilee and the Lord directed him to go to Nazareth. And he fulfilled the scriptures. And Jesus was called a Nazarene.

Well, Joseph was a leader in God's order for the home. He was the provider. He went to Nazareth. He worked. He had a hard job. It said he was a techton. Know what that means? He labored. It could have been masonry, stone or wood. Carpenter's find??? That's a very good word for his shop. Carpenter. He could have been a stone mason, he could have been something else in the trades, but probably the earliest reports are he was a carpenter. And that was hard work and it meant long hours. But he was a leader in God's order for the home.

It says in the scriptures that houses and wealth are inherited from parents and a prudent life is from the Lord. Proverbs 13:22, "A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous." You see, Joseph provided well enough for his family that when he died, he had the business established and Jesus kept right on. Supported the boys and girls coming up through the family and saw them launched off and took care of Mom. Now that's wisdom and his father taught him.

Real quickly, let's turn over to Mark chapter six in verse three. Because the sixth facet of a godly dad's life... One is full of compassion, two is listens to God, and three is staying in touch with God, and four is demonstrating love to their families, and five is working hard to provide for the families, but six is, godly dads like Joseph, in Mark 6:3, give their children lessons in living. We can't go into this. We will in the weeks ahead, but godly dads take advantage of their position as dad.

In fact, this morning I was at our little Father's Day thing. I was talking to the children and I said, do you remember who taught you to swim? Do you remember who taught you to ride the bike? Do you remember who taught you? Do you remember when the first time you did that? See, fathers have the unique privilege of being the first one to lead their children into certain phases of their life.

Listen to Mark 6:3, "Is not this the carpenter, the techton, the son of Mary?" The son of Mary? Where's Joseph? He's gone by now. Early church history tells us that he died and that Jesus as a teenage had to assume the roles of leading that family to guide his family from going into poverty and being taken care of by the other family members to actually leading them as an indigenous unit and caring for them. But isn't this the carpenter, the son of Mary? His brothers James and Joseph and Judas and Simon and his sisters are here with us ??? offended him.

But you know what, I see reams of information about Joseph there. Joseph was a modeler. He had taught Jesus his trade. He had taken time, side-by-side with Jesus, to teach him to be a carpenter. ??? always said, you know what? I've got a big project right now. Why don't you come back later, okay? Just go ride your donkey or something else. Oh, I don't have time right now. This is really important, you know? Go talk to your mom, I ... Jesus would have never learned to be a carpenter. Now, yes, I know. He was perfect and he was God and He didn't need to learn. What I'm talking about is that Jesus grew in knowledge and wisdom and stature and favor with God and man. He went through the steps and His father taught Him the trade and He inherited it.

Now, practically, what can we do here? Well, we teach 'em to mow. We teach 'em to drive. We teach 'em to take care of the car. We teach 'em about finances. All we have to do is just put a little time in every week to teach 'em lessons in living, and along the way play out, like in Proverbs, people that are winners and people that are losers. I mean, I love going to Quik Trip. It's a lesson in life. Pull up there and sit for five minutes and watch the people coming in. And explain to your children why those people are in a place in our life. It's such a social insight, say, do you see that person driving that car? That person has made choices. That person has made choices. Look how that one's dressed. Now why do you think they're dressed that way? The proverbs say they're giving a message. What message do you think they're giving? Now, you have to be careful, 'cause they'll learn it. I was returning something to my neighbor and my son, who was three years old, looked right at my neighbor and he said, dad, why (END OF SIDE ONE) ??? and she said, he was standing in the same line at the grocery store and he said, mom, those girls don't have clothes on. And he took the magazines out and turned them around. He says, I'm not going to look at those. Did you know we didn't take him to class, you know, and put pictures up and say, immorality, violence, decadence, watch out, you know? Materialistic, evil society. We just said, you should wear clothes. God says, modesty... They pick it up little by little. Godly dads give their children lessons in living. They do it all the time. They do things together, it's hands-on, it's side-by-side. It doesn't have to be more than a minute or two or five or ten. And it's a little bit every day. And they see it and they watch it and they grow. And a godly dad transfers everyday living to their children.

Now turn to Luke and we're going to conclude. Just a couple more verses and we'll be on our way. Luke chapter two. Joseph is a fascinating study and we'll continue this next week, but, and I want to leave you with this point. Godly dads like Joseph follow God's word for raising children. Verse 27,

“so he came by the spirit,” Luke 2:27, “into the temple and when the parents brought the child Jesus to do for Him according to the custom of the law.” Boy, that’s a very important verse. Joseph had committed to raising his kids according to the book. That means Joseph had spent time knowing what the book says. Joseph knew what God wanted him to do. He knew what raising a child according to the word of God was like. And so it says that he brought Him to the temple so that, according to the custom of the law, they would do for Him. And he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said, you remember all this. This is the benedictus, the blessing. Lord, now you’re letting my servant depart in peace as Simeon gets to pray over Him. But, godly dads like Joseph follow God’s word for raising children.

You say, does it really say that much? It does. And that’s where we’re going to be next time. We’re going to look at what the Bible says a godly dad does. And you know what’s interesting, a godly dad can raise children even after they’re out of his house. He can raise them through prayer. He can raise them through intercessory prayer that he offers for them. He can raise them through wise advice. And we’re going to go through all that. And he can build into them from afar as well as near.

You say, well, wait a minute. What if I’m not married or never will have children? What about that? God says this, He said, the children of the desolate are more than the children of the fruitful. Did you know you don’t have to have physical children that come from your body to be a godly parent? You can be like the apostle Paul, as we’re seeing on Sunday nights, saying to the Thessalonians, I’m your father. And you can disciple and you can win. But, specifically this morning, I’m talking about normal families, father, mother, children. In that sense, godly dads follow God’s word for raising their children.

Let’s just bow for a word of prayer and then we’re going to sing one stanza of one hymn on Father’s Day to honor our dads, and we’ll be on our way to Sunday school. But let’s bow together.

Oh, Lord, I thank you for your word so clear. Such an encouragement, so positive, so uplifting to our hearts to think that dads can have an impact for eternity on their children just by spending time with them, just by living in everyday life, and pointing to God, and knowing your word. Help us to look a little more closely when we’re in your word today, tomorrow and the next day. And as fathers help us to find some truths. And then we ask you to give us opportunities to share that with our children and to model and side-by-side with them teach them lessons about life, because godly dads raise their children according to the scriptures. Thank you for the privilege. Encourage us as your men in this world and help us not to be a missing papa. Let us be involved with our families for your glory. In Jesus’ name, Amen.