

991201 Wed GDGW-5

GROWING DADS GOD'S WAY

We come now to our 5th stop in a blessed journey. We are examining how to Grow Dads God's Way. Our study so far has taken us into learning:

- ✓ "HOW LEAD OUR HOMES TO GOD THROUGH THE FAMILY ALTAR" a session of how to's in devotions for families. A special Q&A will follow.
- ✓ "HOW TO RAISE PURE CHILDREN IN A SEA OF FILTH" a session of practical insights on purity from Proverbs.
- ✓ "HOW TO LOVE YOUR WIFE BY MEETING HER DEEPEST NEEDS" a time of investigating our greatest challenge of marriage – discipling our wives.
- ✓ "HOW TO RAISE BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS" is a session exploring what Mary chose as her pattern to live out as a young lady. The result we know, she was highly favored by the Lord.

Now, this evening we will learn from:

JOSEPH: A PATTERN FOR GODLY DADS

The key to Joseph's parenting was that he led his family to worship God. Nothing spectacular, nothing superhuman, just regular and consistent. But the results were extraordinary. A modern illustration of this type of consistency can be found in the upbringing of John Paton¹.

John Paton was a Scottish missionary to the New Hebrides, islands that are today called Vanuatu, located one thousand miles north of New Zealand and four hundred miles west of Fiji. Paton arrived November 4, 1858, on the island of Tanna at the age of thirty-four, with his wife, Mary Ann. A son was born February 12, 1859. "Our island exile filled with joy," Paton wrote in his autobiography² (page 79), but "the greatest of sorrows was treading hard upon the heels of that joy!" First came the fever, then diarrhea, then pneumonia and delirium. On March 3 Mary died. "To crown my sorrows, and complete my loneliness, the

¹ Piper, A Godward Life, pp.284-286.

² John G. Paton, The Autobiography of John G. Paton (Edinburgh:Banner of Truth, 1965).

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dear baby boy, whom we had named after her father, Peter Robert Robson, was taken from me after one week's sickness on the 20th of March (page 79).

Paton buried both of them with his own hands and "with ceaseless prayers and tears...claimed that land for God." He confessed, "But for Jesus, and the fellowship He vouchsafed me there, I must have gone mad and died beside that lonely grave! (page 80).

What kind of father prepared John G. Paton for that kind of perseverance -- another fifty years of rugged, faithful missionary labor?

Paton's father, James, was converted at seventeen and immediately convinced his mother and father that the family should have morning and evening prayer together. Paton writes about his father:

"And so began in his seventeenth year that blessed custom of Family Prayer, morning and evening which my father practiced probably without one single avoidable omission till he lay on his deathbed at seventy-seven years of age...None of us can remember that any day ever passed unhallowed thus; no hurry for market, no rush to business, no arrival of friends or guests, no trouble or sorrow, no joy or excitement, ever prevented at least our kneeling around the family altar, while the High Priest led our prayers to God, and offered himself and his children there. (page 14)"

The place of the Lord's Day was just as crucial in shaping the children in their relation to God and the joy of his fellowship. Paton writes:

"Our place of worship was the Reformed Presbyterian Church at Dumfries...four miles from our Torthorwald home; but the tradition is that during all these forty years my father was only three times prevented from attending the worship of God...Each of us, from very early days considered it no penalty, but a great joy, to go with our father to the church; the four miles were a treat to our young spirits, the company by the way was a fresh incitement... A few other pious men and women, of the best Evangelical type, went from the same parish...and when these God-fearing peasants 'foregathered' on the way to or from the House of God, we youngsters had sometimes rare glimpses of what Christian talk may be and ought to be. They went to church, full of beautiful expectancy of spirit -- their souls were on the outlook for God, and they returned from

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church, ready and even anxious to exchange ideas as to what they had heard and received of the things of life." (pages 15-16)

"There were eleven of us brought up in a home like that; and never one of the eleven, boy or girl, man or woman, has been heard, or ever will be heard, saying that Sabbath was dull or wearisome for us. " (page 17)

Such was the father and the family that fit John G. Paton to suffer, to survive, and rejoice in the glorious work of the gospel among the cannibalistic tribes of the New Hebrides.

So tonight I ask you, and myself

- (1) Dad, Is your family altar established? Is there a place and a time for family focus on the Word and prayer that takes priority over less important things? Do you lead it when ever possible?
- (2) Dads, do you come to corporate worship here at our fellowship with a beautiful expectancy of spirit on the lookout for God?

A great secret of rearing children who endure for fifty years in the New Hebrides is to be a disciplined, Bible-saturated, worshiping, and joyful dad.

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.”³

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:

³ Piper, Where's Dad, p. 9.

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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 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

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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,

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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! 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)
 - ✓ Joseph had 7 children, he loved his wife and family and paid the price for them! 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)

WHY IS HAVING CHILDREN SO VALUABLE TO A GODLY DAD?

- ✓ **CHILDREN TEACH DADS TO SACRIFICE:** 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

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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 MULTIPLY BLESSINGS:** 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!
- ✓ **CHILDREN KEEP US ALERT TO DANGER:** 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, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 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, "Hlarion 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).

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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 as sick as it is in our society--and by the way, no worse!

FIVE POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD FATHER A GODLY DAD...

FIRST, A GODLY DAD SHARES HIS LIFE WITH HIS FAMILY!

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)

This concept is the compass for determining your child's moral compass. A pastor from the SF Bay area wrote⁴, "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 say⁵, "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."

⁴ Steve Farrar, Point Man, Multnomah, p. 202.

⁵ Ibid., p. 203.

FOUR LANDMARKS OF A LOVING FATHER

What are four landmarks of a loving father? What marks out the region we must guard? Let me briefly trace them:

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 Hendriksen⁶ suggests at least six ways fathers embitter their children:

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ BEWARE OF FAVORITISM. Look at Esau and Jacob's mom Rebecca, then Jacob and his doting on Joseph. It embittered those around.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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)

Fathers must be TENDER.

Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up [this word means⁷ "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:

- ✓ *Listen to them before you spank them⁸, so they know their feeling are important.*

⁶ NTC, Ephesians, p. 261.

⁷ Reinecker, p.540.

⁸ Farrar, p. 211.

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- ✓ Apologize to them when you have been wrong, harsh, angry or negligent.
 - ✓ Accept the concerns, constructive criticism and ideas your wife offers. And, put them in practice.
 - ✓ Be a hugger, holder, encourager and friend. And, spread it onto mom to, not just the children.

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 neat⁹, 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.”¹⁰

Listen to Ken Taylor¹¹ 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)

⁹ Hendriksen, p. 62.

¹⁰ Farrar, p.216.

¹¹ Quotable Quotations, Victor, 1985.

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)

SECONDLY, A GODLY DAD LEADS A LIFE OF INTEGRITY 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 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 godly dad won't misuse his 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.

A godly dad won't misuse his 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.

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A godly dad won't misuse his 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)

A godly dad won't misuse his 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 Eisenman¹² describes some of the tendencies of men who are perfectionists:

- ✓ Perfectionists tend to think in dichotomous categories. Everything is either great or bad, perfect or worthless.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Perfectionists set unreasonable goals for themselves and others.
- ✓ 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)

A godly dad won't misuse his 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 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).

¹² Temptations Men Face, IVP, 1990, pp. 168-70.

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 co-workers, especially if they are women. And most of all remember the lives of your family rest in your care.

A godly dad won't misuse his 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.

Thirdly,
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.

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:

- ✓ Sex education that is actually pushing them to lust building and self gratification.

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- ✓ Self actualization training that seeks them to learn self worship.
 - ✓ Meditation and relaxation techniques that are only thinly veneered Eastern Occultic and New Age arts.
 - ✓ 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.

There are potential doctrinal errors from new or ungrounded faculty members.

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

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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?

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?

There is a place in Scripture for some to be taught outside the home.

- Young Samuel in 1 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 in spite 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)
- Probably Teenaged Daniel

LIVE CONSISTENTLY

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.

SPEAK ENCOURAGINGLY

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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 author¹³ 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)

Do our words strengthen, encourage and heal? Or are they destroying your child from the inside out?

A few years back newspaper writer Mark Patinken¹⁴ wrote a funny yet piercing article about the ways dads often talk to their children. He entitled it, "You're grounded - and other Dadisms".

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.

¹³ Dan Benson, *The Total Man*, p. 183.

¹⁴ Fort Worth Star-Telegram, October 13, 1985, p.6C.

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- 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.



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