

Sunday Sermon

5/7/23

Series: Family Discipleship

Passage: Eph. 5:17-6:4

Title: Leadership in the Home: Honoring the Role of Dad

Good morning, church! Please turn in your bibles to Ephesians chapter 5:17-6:4. This morning we are continuing in our series on Family Discipleship with the start of a miniseries – a series within the series – focusing on leadership in the home. The next three weeks will be focused on these three subjects: honoring the role of father, honoring the role of mother, and keeping your spouse the priority.

As I've noted in previous weeks, even if you're not a parent, this series is ultimately about discipleship - teaching someone what it is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. We began our series talking about the importance of passing the torch to the next generation. As Christians we need to be dialed into that. As parents, we need to be intentional about that. We then talked about the essential vitamins that will influence the spiritual growth of our children: the need for consistent spiritual input at home and consistent spiritual input at church.

Last week, we focused on parenting the next generation in the way that God parents us. One of my mentors used to say, **"Rules without relationship leads to rebellion."**

Last week, we saw that a love relationship/not fear-based obedience is God's bottom-line. His focus is shepherding the heart not just rules, giving us freedom and space for failure in the safety of a loving environment, while at the same time establishing clear expectations and consequences through which we learn to grow and mature. This is how God parents us, disciples us.

This week we shift to honoring the role of the father. The bible says that we should honor our fathers. This speaks first to our biological, earthly fathers, (and I recognize for some of us that wasn't a good relationship, but the role of father is still one to be honored) but it also applies to our relationship with our heavenly Father, as well as to the men in our lives who are "spiritual fathers" to us, as Paul was a spiritual father to Timothy in scripture. The bible is clear that the father role should be a role highly honored because, as we shall see today, it is an important role with an incredible amount of influence.

Now don't worry mothers, you might be asking, "Well what about me?" We are not overlooking you. We'll get you next week, but our goal today is to honor the God-ordained role of the father.

That said, read with me Eph. 5:17-6:4. We will be using this text as a launching place for the next three weeks as we focus on leadership in the home. Hear God's Word this morning. [Read and Pray]

There were three fathers in a hospital waiting room whose wives were giving birth. After a while a nurse came out to tell the first dad that his wife had given birth to twins. He said, "That's amazing! I work for the Minnesota Twins!"

At that moment another nurse came out and said to the second father, "Congratulations! You have triplets!" The father was astounded. "That's amazing," he said, "I work for 3M!" Upon hearing this the third father fainted. After being revived, he told everyone that he worked for 7-11.

Can any fathers relate to this? Becoming a father can be a mixture of excitement and anxiety. I remember becoming a father for the first time. There's a lot of pressure, a lot of unknown. All of a sudden you are entrusted with a helpless little life. To protect and provide for it. And that little person is going to learn from you, and be shaped by you, and grow up and be launched into society to shape it for better or for worse.

I read this quote this week from Tony Evans book *Kingdom Man*. I'm going through it with a man that I am mentoring. In the book Evans has this quote about the influence of the father: **"If you are a messed up man, you are going to contribute to a messed up family. If you are a messed up family, you are going to contribute to a messed up church. If you are a messed up church, you are going to contribute to a messed up community. If you are a messed up community, you are going to contribute to a messed up state. If you are a messed up state, you are going to contribute to a messed up country. If you are a messed up country, you are going to contribute to a messed up world. Therefore, the only way to have a better world, made up of better countries, composed of better states, filled with better communities, influenced by better churches, inhabited by better families, is by becoming a better man. It starts with you."** – Evans, *Kingdom Man*, 145.

Father's shape children, who shape the world. Is it any wonder that the Bible tells us to honor our fathers?

Now, I want to be intentional this morning because, in my experience, in sermons about fatherhood, the fathers typically get hammered. Sermons about mothers are nice and sentimental because mom's work hard, and do a lot for the family, and we all get that the meaningful parts of the world would absolutely cease to function without women. With men the message to often "do better." Be better. You're screwing it up. Why? Because the man's sin is passivity. If someone else can do it, we'll gladly let them. Where's the remote?

But that is not the intention of this sermon. Today, I want to bring honor to men. In a society that is constantly demeaning the role of the father, where the messages in our sitcoms are that men are nothing more than dumb, lazy, idiots, where masculinity is being systematically attacked as wrong or evil – God says, "Honor your fathers." **"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. And God blessed them and said to them be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it."** – Gen. 1:28. From the beginning of creation God wove into the fabric of the universe fatherhood and motherhood as a key piece of the creation mandate. And with that here is our big idea this morning: **Every father has a God-given role to fulfill.**

And for the rest of our time this morning, I want to look at the role of the father as ordained by God. That we might honor it. Whether you have biological kids or spiritual ones - if you are a man, your role in God's kingdom is one to be honored.

So to start, let's break down the word itself: The word "Father" in the Greek is the word "Pat'er" which comes from a root word signifying: "a nourisher, protector, upholder." Nourisher is the idea of "teacher." Providing what is necessary of one's growth, health, and good. Protector is pretty self-explanatory but is used as one responsible to cast a covering over. Creating a defensible place of safety and well-being. Upholder is the idea of providing both help to and establishing a place of right standard.

268x in the NT the word pat'er is used of God, and 150x pat'er is used in reference to men. In the very fabric of the word, we have our example: that just as God the Father is the perfect example of a nourisher, protector, upholder, so has God given that honorable role to men. Specifically, in their role as father.

"I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go."

– Is. 48:17

"The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe." – Prob. 18:10

"I will strengthen you, I will help you, yes, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." – Is. 41:10.

"Pat'er"

Now question: Are there times when a mother is called to fulfill the roles of nourisher, protector, upholder? Yes, there are, and there is nothing wrong or unbiblical with that. But in our understanding the Word of God, what we need to understand is that God has placed a divine call on men, on fathers (biological and spiritual) to be imitators of him in these specific ways: nourisher, protector, and upholder.

So in that, I have three honors for the role of father. To unpack these, we'll be looking at a few different passages this morning, but the first one will be from the passage we just read. Look with me at Eph. 5:23. ***"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its savior."***

Honor #1: The Father's Role as Leader

Write this down: **Every father is responsible to be a Spirit-controlled, loving, Christ-like leader in the home.**

Now I recognize in our culture today that headship can be a prickly subject, especially if our experience of a father or a husband is not a healthy one. But I also want to encourage us not to take this out of context and to recognize that "headship" in God's world looks a lot different than headship looks in our flesh. That's why we say that when it comes to the father's role as a leader, **every father is responsible to be a Spirit-controlled, loving, Christ-like leader in the home.**

The entire chapter of Eph. 5 is based around this idea: ***Be imitators of God***. So when God says, “You’re the head,” he is actually saying, “You’re to be the head, imitating how I am, as your head. You’re to lead as I have shown you how to lead.”

And we will unpack that more, here, in the coming weeks, but as the leader in the home and in our relationship to our children, “father” is a statement of position and responsibility. He is responsible to set the spiritual climate of the home.

Eph. 6:4 – Addresses the role of dad’s specifically, ***“Without provoking, bring your children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”***

To “bring up” means “to nourish, nurture, feed, raise” – that equals creating an ENVIRONMENT. Fathers set and provide the security of that right environment by being a **Spirit-controlled, loving, Christ-like leader in the home**. Every child needs that type of leadership.

This past week, I read a story of Christian parents whose young son had become very ill. After a series of exhaustive medical tests, they learned that their son was going to die. The boy had already trusted in Christ as his Savior, so they knew the child would be with Christ. But they still had to tell their son. Dad went to the bedside of his son and told him that the doctors said he only had a short time to live. They hugged and wept together and then the father asked, “Are you afraid to meet Jesus?” Blinking away a few tears, the little boy answered, “No, not if He’s like you, Dad.” Are you leading in your home as an imitator of our Heavenly Father?

- 1) We want to honor the father’s role as leader.
- 2) We want to honor the father’s role as teacher.

Turn with me to Proverbs 4. Proverbs 4 is all about the importance of a father’s instruction.

More than a leader, God brings honor to the father’s role as a “teacher.” So often we think of the mother as the teacher for our children. We think the husband goes out and works hard and the mom stays home and teaches the kids. But that’s not what we find as the pattern given in scripture. Here we see that it is the father’s role to offer instruction.

Proverbs 4:1 – ***“Hear, O sons, a father’s instruction.”*** Verse 3, ***“When I was a son with my father...he taught me and said to me, ‘Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commands and you will live.’”***

A father’s instruction is life-giving, maybe even life-saving. How many lives have been messed up because of the absence of a father’s instruction? And notice the multi-generational discipleship happening in these verses. **Listen: When fathers function in their God-given role, children learn valuable instruction concerning life.**

How is this accomplished? By the father quitting his job staying home and homeschooling his kids? No. Deut. 6, ***“Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door-frames of your houses and on your gates.”***

God tells us the instruction takes place in everything you do with your children. Walking along the road, watching TV, going to the mall, going on vacation, going out to a restaurant. Teaching in the midst of everyday life.

Growing up, Sundays were family days. I always wanted friends to come over. My dad was like, "Nope." There were days I didn't like it. But I remember one day, early in my ministry with CRU, when God impressed upon me the realization of the incredible gift I was given by the instruction of my father, who had valued family time and taught me the value of it as well.

Studies have shown that in our society fathers have gotten away from being actively involved in the life of their children. Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner wanted to determine how much time middle class fathers spent with their one-year-old children. The fathers estimated 15 to 20 minutes. Microphones were placed on the shirts of the kids to find out the actual parental interaction. The average amount of time each dad spent with his kids was 37 seconds, an average of 2.7 daily encounters of ten to fifteen seconds.

Fathers, we have been ordained by God for the role of instruction. What are we teaching the next generation?

And part of the father's role in instruction is *discipline*. Proverbs 3:11-12 tells us that we receive discipline from the Lord, just as a father. ***"My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in."***

What is the purpose of discipline? It is to help us be righteous. We don't enjoy it. Yet we all need it.

Another piece of the father's role in instruction is *tenderness*. We often think of the role of men and fathers as strong, macho, emotionally hard or detached. But that's not God's example of fatherhood. One of my favorite verses in all of scripture comes from Zephaniah 3:17, ***"The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty warrior who will save (powerful, strong, macho man); he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love (tender, loving, caring), he will exult over you with loud singing."***

Studies continue to show that in homes where fathers were willing to show a gentle and affectionate relationship to their children, the children turned out with a much healthier understanding of interpersonal relationships, especially in matters pertaining to physicality or sex. We call this "having daddy issues."

Listen: We have a society of fathers who can't express love to their children; so their children look elsewhere for love. Do you understand the weight and influence of your role as a man and as fathers? When is the last time you told your children you loved them and gave them a big hug and kiss? I don't care how old they are! Every night since birth I have told Anna and Sarah

the same 3 things: I love you. I am proud of you. And you are beautiful. Why? Because they need to know it. And they need to hear it from their father.

And this brings us to our last honor this morning:

- 1) We honor the father's role as leader.
- 2) We honor the father's role as teacher.
- 3) We honor the father's role as example.

The God-given role of the father is to be an authentic and worthy example for his children to follow. We call that a role model.

You don't have to look very far to find statistics on the effects of not having a father in the home.

According to a study put out by Duke University – 70% of runaways, 70% of juvenile delinquents, and 70% of child murderers come from homes where the father is absent. 54% of all women inmates grew up without a father. In 2013 a study showed that 60% of felons come from fatherless homes.

There's even an article published by BBC Earth and the Discovery Channel that links violent behavior among adolescent elephants with the absence of a father-figure in their lives. It's just fascinating that this is even found in the animal kingdom. We want to honor the father's role as an example.

In 1 Cor. 11:1 the Apostle Paul, says to the church at Corinth, ***"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."*** When writing to his spiritual son Timothy in 2 Tim. 1, he lays out the ways he was an example, a model for Timothy to follow.

He says, "I thank God for you. I have modeled prayer for you. I have fanned the flame of faith in you. I have modeled servanthood and suffering for you. I've shown you the power of God. Follow the pattern of teaching you have learned from me."

Why? Because the next generation needs an authentic and worthy example to follow. And in that we honor the role of the father.

In the passage we started with today, Eph. 5, Paul did not begin by telling fathers what to do with their children. Paul began by telling fathers to be imitators of God.

Paul did not begin by telling fathers to fill their children's minds with Bible.

Paul began by telling fathers to first be filled with the Holy Spirit of God.

Paul did not begin by telling fathers to impart wisdom.

Paul began by telling fathers to walk wisely, understanding the will of the Lord.

Paul did not begin by telling fathers to demand obedience and honor.

Paul began by telling fathers to love and honor their wives.

Every father is to be an authentic and worthy example for his children to follow.

Be there

Be real, authentic (not perfect)


Be worthy, someone they can look up to. And in that, remember that God is our model Father. Psalm 103 – God is a Father slow to anger, abounding in steadfast (unwavering) love. A Father who is full of mercy, and does not keep a record of wrongs. A Father who is full of compassion, who knows and understands his children-their capabilities and their limitations.

And we should honor this Father. Do you know him? Have you accepted and experienced his love for you? Have you become his child? John 1 says that to those who accept Jesus Christ who believe in his name, God gave right the right to become his children. Would you do that this morning? Because only in relationship with him can we be imitators of his perfect love.



And the next generation needs healthy fathers. **Men, I bet you can think of 5 people immediately who would benefit from having a strong male role model in their life.** Go be that. We honor the role of the father as leader. We honor the role of father as teacher. And we honor his role as example.



Let's ready our hearts for communion.





“If you are a messed up man, you are going to contribute to a messed up family. If you are a messed up family, you are going to contribute to a messed up church. If you are a messed up church, you are going to contribute to a messed up community. If you are a messed up community, you are going to contribute to a messed up state. If you are a messed up state, you are going to contribute to a messed up country...”





“If you are a messed up country, you are going to contribute to a messed up world. Therefore, the only way to have a better world, made up of better countries, composed of better states, filled with better communities, influenced by better churches, inhabited by better families, is by becoming a better man. It starts with you.”

– Evans, *Kingdom Man*, 145





“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. And God blessed them and said to them be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it.”

– Gen. 1:28



Big Idea:

Every father has a God-given role to fulfill.





Father = Gk. *“Pat’er”*

meaning:

“nourisher, protector, upholder”





“I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go.”

– Is. 48:17





“I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go.”

– Is. 48:17



“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe.”

– Prov. 18:10





“I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go.”

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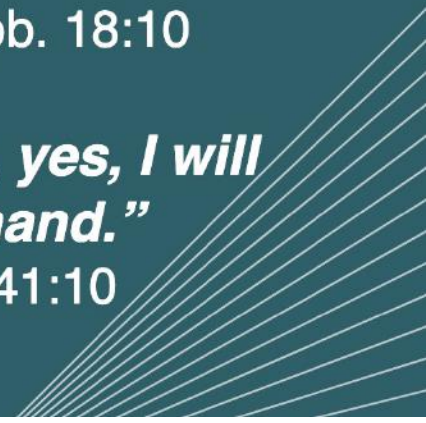


“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe.”

– Prov. 18:10

“I will strengthen you, I will help you, yes, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

– Is. 41:10





***“For the husband is the head of the wife,
even as Christ is the head of the church,
his body, and is Himself its Savior.”***

- Eph. 5:23



Honoring the Role of Father



#1: The father's role as leader

Every father is responsible to be a Spirit-controlled, loving, Christ-like leader in the home.





Honoring the Role of Father



#1: The father's role as leader

"Be imitators of God..."

- Eph. 5:1





Honoring the Role of Father



#1: The father's role as leader

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring your children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

- Eph. 6:4



Honoring the Role of Father



- #1: The father's role as leader**
- #2: The father's role as teacher**





Honoring the Role of Father



- #1: The father's role as leader**
- #2: The father's role as teacher**

“Hear, O sons, a father's instruction...When I was a son with my father...he taught me and said to me, ‘Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commands and you will live.’”

- Proverbs 4:1,3





Honoring the Role of Father



- #1: The father's role as leader**
- #2: The father's role as teacher**

When fathers function in their God-given role, children learn valuable instruction concerning life.





“...You shall talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door-frames of your houses and on your gates.”

- Deut. 6:7-9





Honoring the Role of Father



#1: The father's role as leader

#2: The father's role as teacher - *discipline*

“My son, do not despise the LORD’s discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.”

- Prov. 3:11-12




Honoring the Role of Father



#1: The father's role as leader

#2: The father's role as teacher - *tenderness*



“The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty warrior who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love, he will exult over you with loud singing.”

- Zephaniah 3:17





Honoring the Role of Father



#1: The father's role as leader

#2: The father's role as teacher

#3: The father's role as example





Honoring the Role of Father



#1: The father's role as leader

#2: The father's role as teacher

#3: The father's role as example



“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”

- 1 Cor. 11:1





God as our Model Father



Psalm 103 - God is:

Slow to anger

Abounding in steadfast love

Full of mercy

Keeps no record of wrongs

Full of compassion

Knows and understands his children