

Thoughts on Fathers Day

Prayer

I can remember when my twins were younger... Boys would come to the door thinking they were good enough for my daughters... Now there were some upstanding young men that I was really nice to, but they never seemed to be exciting enough for my gals. Don't know why but for some reason, it was the bad boys they found attractive.

On a side note... So thankful for Kyle... Praise God! Answer to prayer! Still praying for Ariana...

But I digress... I remember one day a boy was coming to pick up one of my girls for a date. When he came in she took him for a tour of my office showing him a whole raft of Tae Kwon Do photos and trophies, she then showed him my gun collection...

As her dad, I thought: "Well done you!"

Another time a guy was coming to pick up Ariana for a date... I'll call him Duncan Donuts... I had heard from Athena that this young man had dumped his last girlfriend and was sleeping with his best friends girlfriend and now he wanted to date my daughter...

You may ask why I would allow this? I take my role as protector seriously, but if as a parent you get too controlling, you can damage your relationship with your kids.

Anyway, when he came to the door I invited him in and he was very polite and asked my what I was going to do this evening. I had the case with my 9mm sig sauer on the table and said: "Don't worry about me, I'll simply be staying in tonight cleaning my gun..."

As Fathers we want what is best for our kids and we can be somewhat uh... protective.

I remember one time a guy didn't bother coming in just kept honking in the driveway... I didn't let her go. You see, he had a reputation for doing this with other girls in the school. We had discussed it the day before and agreed that if he was going to take my daughter out, he could come to the door. After she told him to come to the door he did it anyway for about 15 mins. She was upset with me and went to her room. When he finally came to the door, he said to me: Is she coming or what? I told him to give her a few minutes, she was excited about the date and was still checking to see if her mother's wedding dress would fit her...

For the record, before you judge, I have mellowed a lot. And by the time the girls were 16ish. I was much more laid back.

Here is my point though... Don't we as Dads want to do everything we can to protect our families? If we want good mates for our kids, boys and girls, if we want to keep them safe, if we want them to succeed and be happy, then how much more must our heavenly Father want what's best for us? Has God ever shut something down, that which in retrospect you realized he was protecting you from hurt and harm?

If we were honest with ourselves; would protection be our first response when a boy or girl comes to our door that we don't know, or would we openly trust with that which is our most precious?

If a boy came to my door and I said: "So, you like my daughter eh?" to which he replied: "Yeah, she is a dreamboat!" would any of you be tempted - like me to call up and say: "Honey, your barnacle is here!"

Do think this morning, that as we are God's special treasures, when the world comes knocking at our door it may be hard for our good Father to allow us to make our own choices? God knowing that the world can hurt his children still allows us the freedom to choose?

He is our Father, he watches over us, he has given us the Holy Spirit and his Word for our guidance; Then He allows us to choose. As Dads we watch over our kids, we instill morals, principles and guidelines into our kids, but ultimately we let them choose.

God gives us what we need, but not what will harm us. As a Father, if your son comes to you and is just learning to drive and he wants a car for his birthday, do you help your son acquire a car with good safety features, a reliable engine and affordable gas mileage or do you put him in a 600hp convertible fiberglass street rod with nitrous oxide injector?

Now be honest, how many dads out there are thinking yeah, that would be so cool! Fortunately, God has given us Essential Counterparts called wives... Just incase we still have that impulse...

If you have a problem with the thought of providing protection over your family... Ask yourself: Can I see myself saying any of the following:

- Hey Honey, your 13 now, I think your old enough for un-chaperoned car dates
- Hey Son, I noticed many of your friends love getting into trouble with the cops, I like that, way to stick it to the man
- My darling daughter, her is my unlimited American Express Card and the keys to my new car... go crazy!

- Alright listen up, your mom and I are going away for the weekend, don't waste the opportunity... Par-tay!

As Dads we must protect our families and yet not hold on so hard that we squelch the spirit and joy from our kids. They must learn to make intelligent, wise choices. God protects us and yet he wants us to choose to serve him, he wants to give us life and life more abundantly. He wants us to have joy and a full life.

So as Dads made in Gods own image, we love our kids, we protect our kids and want what's best for them. We teach them lessons for their good. We take care of them and do whatever is necessary to see them be successful at life.

So we have a narrow road to walk and many hats to wear. We are protectors, providers, teachers and so on. In our role as dads we focus and direct without breaking spirit and controlling. Not an easy job. Fortunately, we don't have to look far to know what to do. We have God as an example and we have his word as a manual...

Point #1 – Real men ask for directions

Point #2 – Real men read the instructions

Point #3 – Real men do have intense feelings about their kids

Now on to my sermon...

This morning, I want to look at three kinds of Fathers that God is looking for in us...

The first is obvious...

- Fathers of biological or adopted children
 - God wants us to be responsible for our kids. He has given us many examples and even a few warnings... for example:
 - Ephesians 6:4 NASB
 - *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*
 - 1 Timothy 5:8
 - *But 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*
- Fathers in Zion (Church Fathers)
 - God wants us to be examples
 - God wants us to set the standards
 - God wants us to actively take responsibility
 - 1 Corinthians 4:14-16 CEV

- *I am not writing to embarrass you. I want to help you, just as parents help their own dear children. Ten thousand people may teach you about Christ, but I am your only father. You became my children when I told you about Christ Jesus, and I want you to be like me.*
- Fathers (& Mothers) of Spiritual Sons and Daughters
 - God wants us to personally disciple individuals
 - God wants us to build real relationships with those younger in him and those we lead to him
 - 1 Corinthians 4:17 CEV
 - *That's why I sent Timothy to you. I love him like a son, and he is a faithful servant of the Lord. Timothy will tell you what I do to follow Christ and how it agrees with what I always teach about Christ in every church*

Do you see where Paul is saying: "I want you to be like me." The Apostle Paul is a wise church Father. Can you see what he is saying here between the lines?

Paul is telling us of the universal truth that as Spiritual Fathers people will follow what you do, not what you say. The man is the message. Fathers, you can talk your head off to your kids about not swearing, but if you do, so will they. If your life does not reflect what you say, they will not follow your words. You will become frustrated and feel ignored and may even become angry. As Fathers, we must lead by example.

Do you know that parents usually get most upset about things in their children that they are not happy with in themselves? Yikes. Even more than that, your body language and non-verbal communication speaks volumes. Trying to speak to an issue that you are exemplifying yourself, is like spitting into the wind.

Reminds me of seeing old doc Wilson as a kid. My mom was still smoking at the time and she was in his office. He told her that she had to quit smoking, it wasn't good for her and would eventually kill her... he said all this as he lit his pipe in his office...

Now if our natural kids watch us that closely and pick up on it... What are our spiritual children doing?

Okay... Now it gets really real.

There are fathers out there who have abandoned their kids. There are fathers who have assaulted their kids in various ways. There are controlling fathers out there. There are abusive fathers out there.

What about absent fathers?

If your Father has abandoned you there is a promise directly from God for you this morning...

Psalm 27:10 CEV

Even if my father and mother should desert me, you will take care of me

Remember what we read in 1 Timothy 5:8 NASB

But 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

If a biological father has abandoned you, then you need to know that God will step in. You may also have a spiritual Father in the house of God!

So when we tell individuals in this category about our Good Father God and the reactions are very negative, we should not be surprised. We may get reactions from "I don't want or need a father", "If God is a Father, then he isn't a friend of mine", "If God is a Father then I don't want anything to do with him" and so on...

Here is what we a Christians need to know...

God is not LIKE a Father. He is not a simile... He is the archetype. He is the perfect model from which all Fatherhood is derived. As hard as it is men, we may be the best Father to our kids and provider/protector of our household, yet it is God who is the standard by which all other Fathers are judged.

That said, I think we can look at four inherent characteristics that make us great Fathers, based on the example that he has provided:

1. Great Fathers always put their children's needs before what they want
2. Great Fathers love unconditionally
 - a. God did - John 3:16
3. Great Fathers patiently wait for a child to come back on track
 - a. Prodigal Son - Luke 15:11-32
4. Great Fathers are visionary and directional in that they take an active role in preparing their child for the future

a. Train them up – Proverbs 22:6

Friends God put our needs first, he gave us his son, he will never leave you or forsake you, he know the plans he has for you plans to prosper you and not to harm you and he stands at the door and knocks.

There is no better example than we can follow in our quest to be great fathers than that of our Lord God.

We need to receive his love; we need to support every father in this place in prayer, whether they be natural fathers, church fathers or spiritual fathers.

Finally, let me say this... As Fathers we will try our best and sometimes we will make mistakes. Asking God for help and making it right with our kids is not a sign of weakness it is a sign of a father putting their children's needs above their own.

Conclusion:

Today we gather to honor our heavenly Father and the Fathers that many of us have been blessed with. We look closely today at the role of father and we acknowledge them for all that they do. It is a serious responsibility to be a father and we need to give it the gravitas that it deserves.

Whether you are a biological father, a step-father, an adoptive father, a church father, or a spiritual father this morning - you are honored today in this place for all that you do. I would like to us to lift up in prayer each of the fathers in this church and those whom we love and are distant. Let us pray that God will strengthen, lead and guide and bless every father. Finally, let us pray that every father will exemplify God in this tremendous role.

Prayer