

The Instruction of a Father

A devotional summary from Pastor Mike Fields in the Family Life series

Bible Text(s) Used

Proverbs 1:8-9ⁱ; Psalm 103:13-14ⁱⁱ; Ephesians 6:4ⁱⁱⁱ; Genesis 2:15^{iv}; Genesis 3:6^v; Romans 5:12^{vi}; Luke 2:52^{vii}

A father's instruction shapes character

Pastor Mike opened from Proverbs 1:8-9, where a son is told to hear his father's instruction and not forsake his mother's teaching. He explained that the word instruction carries the idea of training, discipline, and character formation, while teaching points to guidance and direction. God designed fathers and mothers to bring complementary gifts into the home. Together, they help children grow into people who carry wisdom with dignity, like a graceful garland and pendant. The goal is not merely well-behaved children, but sons and daughters who grow in wisdom, favor with God, and favor with people.

Reflection / Discussion: Where has God placed me in a position to shape character, not just correct behavior?

A father instructs with compassion

Psalm 103 says that as a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him. Pastor Mike connected this to the way God remembers our frame and knows that we are dust. Earthly fathers are called to reflect that same patience. Children are learning, stumbling, testing limits, and growing. Compassion does not excuse rebellion, but it remembers weakness. A godly father does not train with harshness, humiliation, or impatience. He teaches with the steady tenderness of the Father who knows our limitations and still draws near helping us grow.

Reflection / Discussion: How can I show compassion without becoming passive or careless in leadership?

A father instructs through righteous discipline

Ephesians 6:4 gives fathers both a warning and a calling: do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Pastor Mike reminded fathers that discipline must disciple. It is not a place to vent frustration, prove authority, or crush a child's

spirit. Like a surgeon using a scalpel, correction must be careful, purposeful, and only as strong as necessary. Children can be wounded by over-discipline, but they can also be harmed when parents refuse to discipline at all. Biblical discipline is firm, restrained, loving, and aimed at restoration.

Reflection / Discussion: Do my corrections point those under my care toward the Lord, or only toward my displeasure?

A father instructs by protection

Genesis 2:15 says Adam was placed in the garden to work it and keep it. Pastor Mike explained that “keep” carries the idea of guarding, watching, and protecting. Adam’s failure in Genesis 3 was not simply absence; he was present but passive. This becomes a sober reminder that fathers must not only be nearby but spiritually engaged. Protection begins with what fathers put into their children: Scripture, prayer, wisdom, worship, and a biblical view of life. It also includes guarding against influences that can damage the heart, distort the mind, or pull a child away from Christ.

Reflection / Discussion: Where do I need to move from passive presence to active spiritual engagement?

A father leaves a spiritual inheritance

Pastor Mike closed by encouraging fathers, grandfathers, and spiritual leaders not to measure success only by provision, money, or accomplishment. Providing matters, but the greatest inheritance a father can leave is spiritual. Time, prayer, Scripture, conversations, repentance, encouragement, and example all become part of that inheritance. Some may look back with regret, but grace allows a new beginning. Fathers can start again. Grandfathers can still influence. Spiritual mentors can still invest. God is able to use imperfect men who humbly step into their calling as providers, protectors, and priests in the home.

Reflection / Discussion: What spiritual inheritance am I intentionally building for the next generation?

Closing Thought

The instruction of a father is not about perfection, intimidation, or control. It is about faithful presence under God: compassionate enough to understand weakness, disciplined enough to correct with love, and watchful enough to protect what God has entrusted. Whether we are fathers, mothers, grandparents, mentors, or church family, we can help the next generation see the goodness of God by living His Word before them. When we have failed, we repent. Where we

have been passive, we reengage. And where we feel inadequate, we trust the grace of the Father who equips His people for the work He calls them to do.

Source: Sermon transcript and Pastor Mike Fields' notes, June 21, 2026.

References

i

Proverbs 1:8–9

8 Hear, my son, your father's instruction,
and forsake not your mother's teaching,
9 for they are a graceful garland for your head
and pendants for your neck.

ii

Psalm 103:13–14

13 As a father shows compassion to his children,
so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.
14 For he knows our frame;
he remembers that we are dust.

iii

Ephesians 6:4

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

iv

Genesis 2:15

15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

v

Genesis 3:6

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes... she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

vi

Romans 5:12

12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

vii

Luke 2:52

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.