

## We Need Dad!

Happy Father's Day to all of our dads! We are so thankful for you and for all that you guys do for your families! We just want to take a moment and celebrate you!!

Today, as we close out our series **Fighting for Your Family** I want to start by praying over our dads and for those of us in here today who may have had a lifetime of emotional struggle because of your dad's lack of involvement in your family. As we are going to look at this morning, FATHERS have incredible influence over their families. And so my prayer for us today is twofold.

**First**, I want to pray for our faithful dads that they would be encouraged and strengthened to continue to impact the lives of their families leading them as God intended for them to lead. **Secondly** I want to pray for those of us who have struggled emotionally and spiritually because of the failure of our dads who did not take seriously their role as spiritual leader of our homes as God intended and that you would find healing and reconciliation with your father. So let's **PRAY** before we begin our message for today.

As we have seen throughout this series we really do have to fight for our families! We have a real enemy who is trying to undermine our homes and destroy our relationships. Whether he is trying to confuse us concerning the roles we have as a mother or father, the constant assault on our marriages, a lack of vision for what we are trying to accomplish as parents, or the many outside forces trying to steal the hearts of our children. Our families are under attack! And there is no greater evidence of this than the spiritual attack we see on the role of a father.

Fathers, you have incredible power! When you walk into a room your children will either be diminished by your presence or they will be built up and strengthened by your presence. **Dad, which one do you want to be?** We need to understand that as a father there are two ways we can destroy our homes by our presence.

1) To be physically present but to be emotionally disconnected and unengaged with our wives and our children.

2) To be selfish and overbearing, inconsistent in our discipline and even abusive in the way we treat others within the family.

Here is what I would like for us to do today. First off, I want us to look at **3 Distinct Roles of a Father** as outlined for us in God's word. And I want to encourage every father in here to press into and take seriously these three vital roles that God has given us. If we don't, we will leave our families greatly exposed to the attack of Satan. If you are a young man and you don't have a family yet I cannot impress on you enough the importance of taking note of these three roles and make them your daily prayer as God prepares you to become a father and husband one day. Start now thinking about these roles and make them part of your commitment to be a father and husband.

Secondly, I want us to address the hurt many of us may have experienced from our fathers. Those of us who had fathers that didn't take these roles seriously are most likely dealing with emotional and spiritual trauma that has crippled us most of our lives and we need to reconcile that hurt so that we can move forward with the future God has for us. If you are a dad and you have daddy issues, if you don't reconcile this hurt you are prone to repeat with your children what your father did to you. So, we will conclude our time by looking at 3 challenges we need to consider so that we can find healing and reconciliation in our family relationships.

Let's begin by looking at **3 Distinct Roles of a Father!**

### **Genesis 2:8-9 (NIV)**

**8** Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. **9** The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil..... As we look at this passage I want you to think of the garden as your home. This is the place where you dwell. The place where you raise up your family. The place where you make your home. Notice the THREE roles God gave Adam in his home.

**15** The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it

The first role ADAM had was as a **PROVIDER**. One of the important roles we have as fathers is to make sure our family has what it needs. Not just financially either. We are to strive to meet physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, and other kinds of needs. The idea is that we will do whatever it takes to make sure our children and wife have their basic needs met. Our wife may share in this responsibility with us but we are the ones God will hold accountable to make sure it gets done. How different would our world be if all father's took on the role of PROVIDER?

**15** The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

The second role ADAM had was to be a **PROTECTOR**. This is more than just one who provides physical protection. We are also responsible to provide spiritual protection as well. The mentality is that whatever comes for your family must come through you first. DAD's you are the gatekeeper to your home! Nothing should be allowed into your home that will harm your wife or children. You will seek to protect the peace and deal with all enemies to that peace. I have a responsibility that has been given to me by God to be alert and aware of anything that comes and goes in my home. How different would our homes be if we father's didn't leave our families exposed to the enemies that seek to destroy our homes but actually took this role seriously and stood guard over our homes and were alert and aware of what is going on in our own homes?

Notice the third role God gave Adam.

**16** And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; **17** but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” **18** The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

This third role is the role of **SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE HOME**. Adam was responsible for making sure his family followed God. He was to be intentional and strategic in leading and instructing his family about God and His word!! He is to be the first one up and ready for worship. He doesn't wait for others to teach his kids about God. He takes on that role. Again, it doesn't mean his wife will not help with this but he is responsible for making sure it gets done. He is to lead in prayer. He takes the initiative. This is his responsibility. This is also the OT model we see moving forward where the father is considered as a priest to his family. Spiritual Leadership is the father's role. The reality is we will lead our families spiritually one way or another. We will either lead them to God or away from Him.

These responsibilities are crucial to the spiritual temperature in our homes and we see the damage that occurs when we fathers fail to take these roles seriously. Look at what happens in **Genesis 3**.

### **Genesis 3:1 (NIV)**

**1** Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

Question: **How did the serpent get into the garden and why is he allowed to have a conversation with Adam's wife?** Notice the serpent is allowed to call into question what God has said and Adam does nothing to prevent or to counter what the serpent is saying. Because Adam is passive in his role as protector he allows the serpent to have access to his wife and to plant doubt in his her mind regarding what God has said. It seems that Adam's first mistake is a failure to PROTECT his home.

### **Genesis 3:2-6 (NIV)**

**2** The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, **3** but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” **4** “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. **5** “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

**6** When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. This is how we are tempted as well. With the Lust of the Eyes, the Lust of the Flesh and with the Pride of Life. Part of the protection and spiritual leadership role we have as fathers is to protect our families and ourselves from temptations that

will come. Adam could have kept the serpent out of the garden or at the very least he could have put a stop to the conversation as soon as God's word was called into question. But in neither case did he provide any spiritual leadership. He even partakes with Eve in breaking God's commandment and based on the text is with her there the whole time this conversation is taking place.

Question: Why didn't Adam say something? He was there with her the whole time. It is apparent that he forsakes his leadership responsibilities. One of the worst things we can do as a father is to passively lead our families. Here is what I want you to see, doing nothing is also leadership. Unfortunately, it is the wrong kind. Notice what happens.

### **Genesis 3:7-8 (NIV)**

**7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

**8** Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. **9** But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

Who does God address first? It is Adam! Why? Because he had the responsibility to Protect the Garden and Spiritually Lead his family but it appears as if he forsakes both responsibilities and as a result his family is ravaged by sins consequences. God is ultimately holding him accountable to his role as a father and husband! I want you to notice how Adam responds.

**Genesis 3:10-12 (NIV)** He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." **11** And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" **12** The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Adam ultimately blames God and his wife for the problem while God is trying to get him to see that he is the one that is responsible for what had happened by not fulfilling his role as a father and husband.

Part of our struggle as men to take on our role as a father (which make no mistake it is the work of our enemy) is the result of several things:

- 1) Poor role model or examples
- 2) Confusion of our roles (culture has made this very confusing)
- 3) Living with unconquered sin (addictions or sin that has us in its grip and that hinders us from our spiritual leadership.)

Dads we are a MIRROR, a THERMOSTAT, and a COMPASS when it comes to our families. The way we live impacts the way our family will go most of the time. We are like a mirror in that what we do our children will have a tendency to copy. Dads, are you ok with your children doing what you do? We are a thermostat in that the spiritual temperature of our home will never rise above where we are spiritually in our relationship with God. Is that the level you want your family to live at for God? We are a compass that points our children and our wife in the direction that they

should go. Are you pointing your children and your wife to a closer walk with Jesus? I don't know about you but this is very sobering for me. It causes me to say, "LORD help me for I am unworthy in all of these areas."

Our role as fathers is so serious that God gives Israel a stern warning regarding its implications for them if the fathers do not turn their hearts toward Him and their children. You see the destruction of every civilization always begins with the home. With the leadership of the father. It is true of our nation today as it was true of Israel when their nation fell.

**Malachi 4:5-6 (NIV) 5 "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. 6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."**

The warning is this: If we do not turn our hearts to our children and our children to our fathers (in other words there needs to be a reconciliation between fathers and their children) then God's judgment is coming and that judgment will culminate in total destruction. Are we living under this judgment right now with what we see taking place in our world today? I believe we are and as a result we need to weep for our families! We need to pursue reconciliation! Fathers, we need to take seriously the roles God has given us and we need to turn our hearts to our children and our families. Likewise we children, who have been damaged by our fathers, need to turn our hearts back to our fathers who have hurt us and be reconciled.

Now, here's the real question. How do I reconcile with one in whom it seems impossible to reconcile? I mean, how do I reconcile with my father if he will not admit where he was wrong. What do I do if my father has passed on? How can I reconcile where reconciliation seems impossible? I am willing but what do I do if he isn't or he isn't here to do so?

As we come to the end of our message let me give us three challenges to consider:

**Challenge #1 - If your father has hurt you seek to be reconciled to him by taking these three steps: (Whether you have the opportunity to confront your father or not you need to consider these three steps prior to your reconciliation efforts)**

a) **Accept reality!** I think part of our struggle, if we are honest, is the frustration we feel because we cannot change the past. We cannot undo the hurt. We cannot restore what has been lost. If you have lost your childhood because of your father's actions it is hard to accept that we cannot get that back. It is frustrating and it makes us angry because it didn't have to be that way. For others of us the reality is that your father may never change or you may never be able to reconcile with him because he has passed on from this life. We have to accept that what has happened to us is done and we cannot go back and change it. But that doesn't mean that it has to define our future!! You can choose to forgive him and the hurt he has caused you. Remember, what you do not forgive you will pass on. For the sake of your peace and your future relationships going forward you must accept it for what it is and make the choice to release the hurt through forgiveness.

b) **Mourn the loss!** You cannot be comforted until you allow yourself to mourn what has been lost. We must take our pain to God and allow ourselves to mourn over what we have lost. God understands our pain and loss better than anyone and only He can truly comfort us in our greatest time of need.

**Matthew 5:4 (NIV)** Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

**Psalm 34:17-18 (NIV)** **17** The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. **18** The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

c) **Allow God to take your wounds and make you holy!** There are lots of things I don't understand! I don't understand why certain people have to suffer through certain trauma and difficulties. But here is what I do know. The cause of our wounds is the result of a sin cursed world in rebellion against God. We live in a broken world of our own doing. But our pain, our wounds, and our suffering and even our own sin does not have to define us. Jesus wants to heal and restore what sin has destroyed. He offers us grace and the hope of a new future.

**Romans 8:28-29 (NIV)** **28** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. **29** For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

The promise here is that God is using everything, especially the difficulties to conform us into the image of Christ. He wants to make you like Jesus if you will allow Him to. God is more concerned with our holiness than He is our happiness because ultimate joy is found in Christ without the hindrances of our flesh. Rather than focus on God healing our wounds we need to allow Him to use them to make us holy and set apart to Him. We can be reconciled to our father and our past need not define our future because God is a God of grace!! This is where we will find true healing!!

### **Challenge #2 - Dad, be a leader in reconciliation within your family**

As father's we need to take the lead on this! We should not wait for our children to come to us. Same is true regarding our marriage as well. You set the standard and you seek reconciliation. Nothing is closer to the heart of God than reconciliation.

**2 Corinthians 5:17-19 (NIV)** **17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! **18** All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: **19** that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

**Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV) 23** “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, **24** leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

Dad's don't give Satan any ammunition to cause division in your relationships with your wife or children. Be a leader in reconciliation.

### **Challenge #3 - Concentrate on the Fatherhood of God**

Don't let the failings of your father define for you what a father is but instead let God the Father set that standard. He is a great standard for those of us who didn't have a good model growing up. Let your heavenly Father shape you into the father you should be. If you feel as if you have been abandoned by your father then let the heavenly Father become your father. No matter what we all have a father who loves us! God is our Father if we know Christ as our Lord and Savior.

**Psalms 68:5 (NIV)** A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.

**Psalms 27:10 (NIV)** Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.

**John 14:18 (NIV)** I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

#### **Invitation:**

Father's how is your Mirror? How is your Thermostat? How is your Compass?

Dad, do you have a relationship with Jesus? The roles we talked about at the beginning are not possible without Jesus and His help?