

**Psalm 127**

**June 20, 2021**

**Hebrews 12:7-11**

## **Fathers Are Necessary**

Today is Father's Day... the annual celebration honoring fathers, fatherhood, paternal bonds, and the influence of fathers in society. Father's Day is not a federal holiday, but it is observed by many businesses and churches on the third Sunday of June in many countries. <sup>i</sup> Why is this day, set aside to uplift the value of fatherhood and family, important to Christians and church supporters? Let me give an answer to that question for I believe fathers are more necessary today than ever before.

### **Who Needs Fathers?**

A few generations ago anyone questioning the necessity of fathers would have been considered a kook. It would have been like saying air or water are unnecessary. As Andrew reminded us last week, there is no substitute for water. Likewise, **there is no substitute for fathers.** But we live in a time when some people are blind to the obvious. These days, among the "woke" mob with their upside-down worldview, to say fathers are necessary might be deemed bigoted and narrow-minded. (This is the same mob that says men can be women, and women can be men.)

Author and commentator Dennis Prager has reported that recently The Atlantic magazine published an article entitled "Are Fathers Necessary, A Paternal Contribution May Not Be As Essential As We Think." The NY Times published a discussion among five intellectuals entitled "What Are Fathers For?" One of those geniuses began by writing "I'm not sure a child needs a father." <sup>ii</sup> There are other examples of this nonsense.

How ironic that former President Barak Obama said on Father's Day 2008 (before he was elected President): "Fathers are critical to the foundation of each family. They are teachers and coaches, they are mentors and role models, they are examples of success, and they are the men who constantly push us toward it." Ironic because he grew up without his father in the home. (I wonder what he'd say today).

### **Our Father's Foundation**

Think about this: Jesus called God "Abba" - Father - Papa. That's a fact. **Our Savior understood Himself as "the Son" of His heavenly Father.** This is no accident. The One who created men and gave them life is the example, a mentor and model, for human fatherhood. Earthly fathers need to know their heavenly Father. Moreover, **we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! Hebrews 12:9.** Guys ... as men and fathers we have a sure and certain mission on this

earth. Men are influencers and role models, and ideally good “father figures.” ***Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it, Proverbs 22:6 .***

Some people didn't have good fathers as they were growing up. But the point is not to blame God because some dad didn't live up to God's design and expectation, but to uphold the model of God as the ideal model for our behavior as fathers. Fathers who look to God for guidance are more likely to be good and godly fathers who plant the seeds of good fatherhood in their children.

Psychological and sociological studies, statistics, and surveys tell us what our Christian faith has been telling us for generations: absence of good fathers is harmful to children and families and an alternative to fatherhood is very difficult to find. **A father's guidance to his children is indispensable.**

Both boys and girls need fathers. Boys are not born with an innate understanding of how to be a good and responsible man. Male nature is wild – most obviously in regards to sex and violence. If a boy does not have a father who knows how to control himself, he likely will not learn how to control himself either... or want to. Many men in prison for violent crimes grew up without a father. <sup>iii</sup> You have to wonder how many of the young men (and women) who caused riots in our nation's cities last summer, grew up without a responsible father to model civilized behavior. Fathers need to instruct their sons, primarily by example; especially in these days when our society and culture need more than a few good men. **We need millions of good and godly fathers training boys to be good and godly men.**

Now many mothers have done an excellent job of raising a boy without the father. But common sense tells us that mothers can't fully model for her son what a man should be, any more than a father can model for his daughter what a woman should be. <sup>iv</sup> As much as some would wish it otherwise, unruly boys are more likely to listen to their father than their mother.

**When it comes to girls, their father is THE man they learn to relate to.** When the father is absent several things happen. She will not know how to choose a man wisely. She will not know how a man should treat her and may well end up with a man who mistreats her. Then, in trying to fulfill her primal desire to bond with a man, she will go from man to man. Girls without fathers in their lives are far more likely to be sexually promiscuous and begin sexual activity at an earlier age. This, in turn, explains why many young women are depressed. <sup>v</sup>

**Fathers give both boys and girls what they most need: a sense of safety and security .** Yes, children need love. But they also need security. Generally speaking moms give love and dads provide security. Are fathers necessary? Absolutely.

## Legacy

There is no greater legacy for a father to pass onto his children than his faith in Christ. Christianity is a matter of infinite seriousness, far more serious than economics or politics. Christianity provides the true initiation into the mysteries of life and death, of heaven and hell, of spiritual warfare, and each person's destiny. Fathers demonstrate how Christian faith connects one's life to the Creator and the beauty of creation. Humility, patience, and grace flows from such a life. Fathers show that trust in God enables us to withstand the storms of life. The Christian faith is the underpinning of freedom. When people have an internal moral compass that comes from knowing God's ways, they exercise self-control and can live in peace with others. Freedom in Christ gives confidence to resist bullies and oppressors, be they the kid down the block or the government. Freedom in Christ gives confidence to love those who are different.

Last Sunday I texted a question to several younger parents in our congregation: What makes for a good and godly father? Here's some of the answers...\*

As a father myself, let me offer these bits of advice to lay down a good and lasting legacy:

- **Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man, Eccl.12:13.** Most men believe that being a good provider means supporting a family financially. That's a very good start. Additionally, a father should also contribute to the emotional, spiritual, physical, and mental well-being of his family. You can't do this if you're not answering to God yourself.

- Fathers should lead family prayers, reading the Bible, and take the lead in bringing the family to faith in Christ and attending church. **But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD, Joshua 24:15.** Both boys and girls follow a father's lead. But especially with boys, fathers must demonstrate that Christianity is not a threat to masculinity, rather a fulfillment of manhood and responsible fatherhood. The church is the one place that recognizes the sacred character of fatherhood and God's divine calling for men. **Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord, Eph. 6:4.**

- A good father will genuinely love and care for the mother of his children. The Bible tells us husbands to this. **Husbands love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, Ephesians 5:25.** I know that divorce has pulled parents apart in some cases ... if that is your case then here's some advice: respect the children's mother, never speak ill of her in the children's presence, regardless of how you feel. Model self-control.

- It should go without saying that a good father provides for his family - food, clothing, shelter, and security.

One of the reasons our forefather in the faith, John Wesley, was so dead set against drinking alcohol was because too many fathers spent their wages on rum and left their families wanting for food and clothing. Think again before spending on the latest thing you desire. Could the money better be used to improve life for the children?

- **Dads, let's love our children with an everlasting love.** Spend time with each child – they need your affection, your listening ear, your instruction, and your discipline. Your kids will exasperate you, make you angry at times, and disappoint you, even after you've done your best to guide and instruct them. They often give us opportunities to practice patience and self-control. Love them anyway. Do not disown them. Our heavenly Father loves us even on the days (weeks, months, years) that we ignore Him or disobey Him. Pray for your children that if they stray, they will one day return, to the Lord and to you.

The gospel of Luke reports that a faithful couple, Zacharias and Elizabeth, had long tried to have a child to no avail. While Zacharias was serving in the Temple in Jerusalem an angel of the Lord spoke to him, telling him that his wife would bear a son and to name him John. (See guys, sometimes God speaks to you when you're in church.) This boy would grow up to be John the Baptist who prepared the way for the Savior, and as the angel prophesied John would **turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children** (Luke 1:17; Malachi 4:5-6). There is nothing more important for dads than to turn their hearts toward their children, in all the ways I've outlined. Here's the good news: many men can be fathers. Grandfathers, uncles, teachers, coaches, mentors, pastors, men at church, all good and godly men can be father figures for children.

### **Thank You Dads**

Okay, sorry dads I've gone on too long telling us how to be good fathers. Moms and children, I hope you will remember that Father's Day is a special day to remember Dad. Say thank you to the dads you know who are doing their best. Don't forget to remember and honor God as well ... the Father of our Savior, who is also our heavenly Father. If you didn't have a good Father, just remember that your heavenly Father loves you with an everlasting love.

I want to thank all the dads I know, from this church, who do their best to be good and godly fathers. I encourage you to be regular at church so that you can stay in tune with your best model: our heavenly Father. If you have children in the home, you need to bring them here where they can learn of their heavenly Father as you model for them the divine calling of fatherhood.

Bottom line is fathers are necessary. **We all need a father in our lives.**