



Food for Thought: Father's Day
(Excerpts from Men's Breakfast talk)

Father's Day is tomorrow, and I wanted to take a couple of moments to talk to you fathers and men about what that means. Father's Day is the yearly celebration honoring fathers and celebrating fatherhood, paternal bonds, and the influence of fathers in our society. On Candid Camera, I once heard one young boy describe Father's Day in this way: "It's just like Mother's Day only you don't have to spend as much on presents. You can give Dad anything and he will love you for it."

Dads often get the short end of the stick. I like what my youngest, then eight-years old, daughter said about me in her Father's Day composition. She wrote it almost 38 years ago, but I have kept it all these years. She said: "My dad can climb the highest mountain or swim the biggest ocean. He can fly the fastest plane and fight the strongest tiger. He is super-strong and super-fast. He can do anything. But most of the time he just makes dinner, takes out the trash and plays with me."

From a spiritual point of view, I think that there is a lot of difference between how we honor mothers and dads. We encourage moms on Mother's Day, but we challenge dads on Father's Day. We honor the position of mother, but we examine the quality of fathering.

So in that spirit, I want to honor our dads here today. After all, the fifth commandment says to, "***honor your father and mothers!***" So, Dads, we salute you today, and acknowledge all

that you do for your families. We recognize that your hard work often goes unappreciated, and I think that we have an obligation to stop and say thank you:

So, thank you for loving your wives and your children; for the spiritual leadership you provide in the home; for the examples you set each day; for the knowledge and wisdom you pass on; for working hard and providing income; for making sacrifices that the rest of the family doesn't know about; for working those extra hours for the braces, Christmas presents and vacations; for keeping the home in good shape, and for being there for your family."

Although these are all important aspects of fatherhood, none of us do it perfectly. But we do our best and I thank you for all that you do for your families because 45% of the houses today are rearing children with only one parent. If you are a minority family, then that figure can jump to almost 80%.

Having said all that, I'm still going to challenge you this morning as we look at the characteristics of a Father.

In 1st Thessalonians, Paul gives an inspired description of the qualities of a godly father.

Paul shares this description by way of an analogy. He is sharing how he and his friends ministered to the Thessalonians, and he says that "***We dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.***"

It is a very concise description, a divine blueprint if you will, of what fathering is all about. Once again, it is not the whole story, but God gives us here three essential qualities that every father

should emulate. A godly father is one who encourages, comforts and urges his children to live lives worthy of God. In today's world, that sums up the descriptor – motivation. Erma Bombeck wrote something that is rather intriguing in a piece entitled *"Fathers Day"*. She wrote:

"When the Lord was creating Fathers', he started with a tall frame. An angel standing nearby said, 'What kind of father is that? If you're going to make children so close to the ground, why have you put fathers up so high? He won't be able to shoot marbles without kneeling. He won't be able to tuck a child into bed without bending. He won't even be able to kiss a child without stooping.' God smiled & said, 'Yes, but if I make him child size, who will the children have to look up to?'

"And when God made the father's hands, they were large.... The angel shook his head & said, 'I don't think you want to make hands like that. Large hands are clumsy. They can't manage diaper pins, small buttons, rubber bands on pony tails, or even remove splinters caused by baseball bats.'

"God smiled again & said, 'I know, but they're large enough to hold everything a small boy empties from his pockets at the end of the day – yet small enough to cup a child's face in his hands.'

"Then God molded long, slim legs & broad shoulders. The angel nearly had a heart attack. 'Boy, this is the end of the week, all

right!' he said. 'How's he going to pull a child close to him without the kid falling between his legs?'

"God smiled & said, 'A mother needs a lap but a father needs strong shoulders to pull a sled, balance a boy on a bicycle, or hold a sleepy head on the way home from the circus.'

"God was in the middle of creating two of the largest feet anyone had ever seen when the angel could not be contained any longer. 'That's not fair,' he said. 'Do you honestly think that those large boats are going to get out of bed early in the morning when the baby cries? Or walk through a small birthday party without crushing at least 3 of the guests?'

"Again God smiled, & He said, 'They'll work. You'll see. They'll scare off mice at a summer cabin, or leave footprints that will be a challenge to follow.'

"God worked throughout the night, giving the father few words, but a firm voice & eyes that saw everything. Finally, almost as an afterthought, he added tears. He turned to the angel & said, 'Now are you satisfied that he can love as much as a mother?'

And with that, the angel was silent!

Father's Day gives us a chance to honor those who stand at the helm and lead their family through life's battles. Who show those qualities to their children.

James Dobson, in his book, “Dare To Discipline,” suggests 3 specific things for a father to keep in mind.

1. In the early years – its time with mom. It’s important to see Mom and Dad together. These years bring change and as the child grows, the father often becomes his example in attitude & action that the child use as a model for the rest of his life. A good father must include God, church, and spiritual things for the child to model. Remember, “Fathers are followed,” & this is not something that we can just turn over to Mom to let her handle..

2. The 2nd thing he suggests is that the best thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother. Paul tells the Ephesian husbands to love their wives “...just as Christ loved the church & gave Himself up for her.” ([Ephesians 5:25](#))

3. Thirdly, a Christian father will make time to spend with his children.

He goes on to say that *“Good fathers are made, not born.”* But to be a good father you need a model, an example of a father that you can pattern yourself after. Where do you find such a father? Especially if you were raised without a Father figure? Where do you look? Is there such a thing as a perfect father? Ray’s saying.... *“Practice doesn’t make perfect...perfect practice makes perfect.”*

Today, We Fathers, and Men in general, are under severe attack by the enemy. The battle line against biblical manhood is clearly drawn and fiercely contested. More than ever men who want to follow Christ are asking:

Why is it so hard for me to live a Christian Life?

Who will show me how to thrive as a father, a husband, and on the job?

What should I do when I'm being tested to the breaking point in every direction?

In 1965, Donald Grey Barnhouse wrote a book about it called *The Invisible War*. It is about the battle for your mind. That battle is vicious. It is intense. It is unrelenting, and it is also unfair because Satan never plays fair. And the reason why it is so intense is that your greatest asset is your mind. For whatever you mind thinks, you life style will follow.

I have seen what it is like when people are unable to hear God because their minds are broken and cannot seem to connect to God even when they want to connect to God. And I know whatever gets your mind gets you. One of the most important things we need to learn and teach others is how to guard, strengthen, and renew our minds. We need to teach them how God makes men because the battle for sin always starts in the mind.

There are many passages in Scripture that address this battle that we could look at, but I just wanted to focus in on one in particular, [2nd Corinthians 10:3-5](#). It says:

“Though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh [in other words, we don’t fight with armor, we don’t fight with politics, we don’t fight with money, we don’t fight with all the humanistic ways]. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.”

The apostle Paul says here that our job in this battle is to “destroy strongholds.” You know what a stronghold is? It is a mental block. Paul is talking about pretensions, arguments set up against the knowledge of God. This is a mental battle. And he says, “Destroy these strongholds.”

But how do you do that? And how do you teach other people to do that? How do I make your mind mind? I have noticed that mine doesn’t always mind. It is often disobedient. It is often very rebellious. It wants to go in a different direction. When I want to think a certain way, it wants to go another way. When I need to ponder, it wants to wander. When I need to pray, sometimes my thoughts want to float away. “The battle for sin always starts in the mind.”

To help combat that, I read. I alternate – one book for fun, one book for my Christian walk. One of the books that I read this year was Patrick Morley’s new book, *“How God Makes Men.”*

In that book, Patrick examines 10 Epic Stories from the Bible and how God molded and mobilized these men. He looked at the obstacles they faced, what held them back and how God got them uncoiled to do his bidding. Interesting enough, it not just ten amazing stories. Somewhere, you begin to realize that it is yours, mine, and our stories unfolding right in front of our eyes.

With that book, comes a promise, and it is a big one. If you will absorb and embrace the principles offered by these ten men, you can get past today's shallow cultural Christianity that has one foot left dragging in the secular world. Patrick wants to get you to – or back to – a more biblical centered Christian life.

The Bible says in Proverbs 10:14 that, ***“Wise men store up knowledge”***

We must make time to think. Make time to plan your life. Make time to strategize for a balance between doing and thinking. We need them both in our lives. Today, it is time to think about what your not doing

Father's Day is tomorrow, and my gift to you is a copy of that book. I promise that if you let these ten men mentor you, then, like them, you will become the man God created you to be. You will start releasing the power of god in every direction and in every detail of your life. You will know how to sustain the passion of your faith, and you will be well on the way to writing your own epic story.

You always knew that one day, you would be called upon to take your place on the battlefield, right?

Well this is that call.

The Christian life is not just about knowing; it's *being and doing*.