

# **"The Father of the Righteous"**

**Proverbs 23:19-25 (esp. vs. 24)**

## **F.A.T.H.E.R. – The Godly Father's Character**

Solomon said, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that "The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice..." The question is, "How do we see our children become righteous in this wicked, sinful world?" The answer is found in Scripture, and although there will be exceptions to the rule, the rule still stands – if we want righteous children, we have to be the example of righteousness for them to follow.

Modern research confirms what Proverbs 23:24 states – a father who is actively involved in his child's life plays a crucial role in raising children who develop that "righteous" character. Studies show that children with involved fathers demonstrate greater self-control, are more likely to help others, and are less likely to engage in risky behaviors. The "father of the righteous" isn't just a passive observer – he's actively involved in shaping his child's moral character through consistent, warm, authoritative engagement.

The purpose of this message is to help us consider the question: "What kind of father (or parent) am I?" or, for those here like my wife and I where our children are grown and have children of their own, "What kind of grandfather (or grandmother) am I?"

- Before we go any further today – before we talk about character, conduct, or what kind of father we should strive to be – I must make a very critical point:

None of what will be discovered in this message can be properly lived out apart from a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

You cannot be the father – or the parent – that God has

called you to be unless you have first been born again by the Spirit of God. You can try your best. You might pick up a few helpful habits, imitate good examples, or even turn over a new leaf – but without the new birth, you will always fall short of what God truly wants for you and your family.

Being a godly father doesn't begin with trying harder, but with trusting Christ. It doesn't begin with working for God, but with walking with God.

John 3:3 says, *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* And that includes seeing God's plan for your role as a father.

So if you've never come to Christ in repentance and faith, that is the most important step you can take – not just for your sake, but for the legacy you leave behind. Everything we say today must be built on that foundation.

- With that foundation laid – knowing that a godly father must first be a godly man – we now turn to what that kind of father looks like.

## I. F – FAITHFUL – PROVERBS 28:20

*"A faithful man shall abound with blessings..."* – Proverbs 28:20

A father who is faithful is a blessing to everyone under his influence (and this goes beyond just children).

### A. Faithful to God

1. Faithfulness to God is the foundation for all other areas of faithfulness. If a man's heart belongs to the Lord, it will show in how he leads his home.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7 [we will use these verses a few more times in this message]

<sup>5</sup> And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy

might. <sup>6</sup> And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: <sup>7</sup> And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

2. A father is a steward of what God has entrusted to him – his faith, his family, his influence. The primary requirement? Faithfulness.

1 Corinthians 4:2

<sup>2</sup> Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

## B. Faithful to marriage

1. Faithfulness in marriage is not just about avoiding infidelity – it's about *delighting* in one's spouse and remaining emotionally, mentally, and physically committed.

Proverbs 5:18

<sup>18</sup> Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.

2. God's standard for purity in marriage is unwavering. Faithfulness in marriage reflects the covenantal faithfulness of God Himself.

Hebrews 13:4

<sup>4</sup> Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

3. God takes seriously the vows and responsibilities of a husband toward his wife – it is not just a legal matter, but a sacred one.

Malachi 2:14-15

<sup>14</sup> ... the LORD hath been witness between thee

and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously...

### C. Faithful to family

1. A faithful father doesn't abandon or neglect his responsibilities – he provides, protects, and prioritizes his household.

1 Timothy 5:8

<sup>8</sup> But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

2. The faithfulness of a father directly affects the blessing on the children. Faithfulness leaves a legacy to follow.

Proverbs 20:7

<sup>7</sup> The just *man* walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.

3. A faithful father brings his family into service to God – not by force, but by faithful example.

Joshua 24:15

<sup>15</sup> And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

### D. Faithful to his word (his word is trustworthy)

1. A faithful father is dependable. His children should know that his word can be trusted – he means what he says and says what he means.

Matthew 5:37

<sup>37</sup> But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay,

nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

2. Whether promises to God or to others, a faithful man keeps his word – even when it costs him.

Ecclesiastes 5:4-5

<sup>4</sup> When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for *he hath* no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. <sup>5</sup> Better *is it* that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.

3. True faithfulness doesn't give up just because things get hard. A father who models this will raise children who learn the value of keeping their commitments.

Psalms 15:1-5

<sup>1</sup> LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

<sup>2</sup> He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

<sup>3</sup> *He that* backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

<sup>4</sup> In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. *He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.*

<sup>5</sup> *He that* putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these *things* shall never be moved.

## II. A – ADMONISHING – EPHESIANS 6:4

A godly father lovingly instructs and corrects his children according to the Word of God.

Ephesians 6:4

<sup>4</sup> And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

(I preached on this text last Father's Day, but a few remarks need to be made as a means of review as well as a means of application.)

- Let me pause here and make an important clarification.

The call to *admonish* is first and foremost a father's responsibility toward his own children.

God has given parents – not neighbors, not friends, and not even fellow church members – the primary responsibility and authority to raise and correct their own children in the Lord.

While there may be moments where mutual help or gentle encouragement is appropriate, we must be very cautious not to overstep our boundaries or presume to correct someone else's child in a way that God did not authorize us to.

The best way to help other families raise godly children is to faithfully raise our own – and to model godliness that encourages and uplifts the whole body of Christ.

## **A. What does it mean to “admonish”?**

1. It is verbal instruction aimed at the heart of the child.
  - a) The word literally suggests putting something into the mind (νοῦς= mind, τίθημι= to place).
  - b) This means it's not merely behavior-focused, but heart-and-mind focused.
  - c) The goal is not just outward compliance, but inward conviction and transformation.

2. It is correction that comes from love – not anger.
  - a) Admonition isn't to be harsh or demeaning – it comes from a loving desire to protect and teach.
  - b) Proverbs 3:12 – *"For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth..."*
3. It is instruction that warns – a primary responsibility of the father.
  - a) It is not just *teaching*, but *warning* – instruction with urgency and purpose.
  - b) It's the kind of guidance that says, *"If you keep going down this path, here's where it leads."*
  - c) Acts 20:31 – *"...by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."* (same root)
4. It is part of the discipleship process, not just discipline or correction.
  - a) In the New Testament, admonition is often paired with teaching (Col. 3:16; 1:28; Acts 20:31; 1 Thess. 5:12).

Colossians 3:16

<sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
  - b) It forms a vital part of a father's spiritual discipleship of his children.
  - c) We are not just raising good, moral, polite children – we are raising followers of Christ.

- Admonition is loving, verbal instruction that warns, corrects, and guides the heart of a child toward what is right before God. It's not yelling or scolding – it's speaking truth with clarity, conviction, and compassion.

## B. How do we admonish biblically?

### 1. By Teaching God's Word Regularly

Teach by instruction and by example. Children need to hear the Word and see it lived in our lives.

Deuteronomy 6:7 [verse already seen in this message]

<sup>7</sup> And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

### 2. By correcting with love, not harshness

Correction is not just about punishment – it's also about *discipleship*.

Proverbs 3:12

<sup>12</sup> For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son *in whom* he delighteth.

### 3. By warning against sin

A father's admonition prepares a child for real-world temptation.

Proverbs 1:10

<sup>10</sup> My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

### 4. By encouraging in righteousness

3 John 4

<sup>4</sup> I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

- A godly father doesn't just raise obedient children – he raises godly children.
- And godliness comes not by chance, but by consistent, Christ-centered instruction.

Conclusion to this point: We've seen today that a godly father is first and foremost a man who is faithful – to God, to his marriage, to his family, and to his word. And he is a father who knows how to admonish – to lovingly guide, correct, and instruct his children in the ways of the Lord.

These two traits form a foundation: one of spiritual consistency and intentional leadership. If we get these wrong, everything else starts to unravel. But if we get these right – with God's help – then we're on solid ground to build the rest of what godly fatherhood looks like.

In our next service, we'll continue through the rest of the F.A.T.H.E.R. acronym. We'll see how a godly father is also a Teacher, one who Honors God in all things, sets a godly Example, and walks in Righteousness. Each of these completes the portrait of the kind of father that brings joy to his family – and rejoicing to the heart of God.

I took a piece of plastic clay  
And idly fashioned it one day,  
And as my fingers pressed it still,  
It moved and yielded to my will.  
I came again when days were past --  
The bit of clay was hard at last;  
The form I gave it, it still bore,

But I could change that form no more.  
I took a piece of living clay  
And gently formed it day by day,  
And moulded with my power and art  
A young child's soft and yielding heart.  
I came again when years were gone --  
It was a man I looked upon;  
He still that early impress wore,  
And I could change him nevermore.

## Part II

Last time we began looking at what it means to be a godly father, using the word F.A.T.H.E.R. as our guide. We saw that a father is to be Faithful – steadfast in his walk with God, his commitments, and his character – and that he is to be Admonishing, lovingly instructing and correcting his children in the truth.

Today, we pick up where we left off, looking at the remaining traits that complete this biblical portrait of fatherhood. A godly father is not only faithful and admonishing (instructive), but he is also a Teacher, he Honors God in all things, he sets a godly Example, and he walks in Righteousness.

These final qualities will help us see how a father's influence can shape not just his own children, but generations to come.

### III. T – TEACHES – PROVERBS 4:1-2

A godly father is a teacher of truth – he imparts wisdom, models godliness, and guides his children in the fear of the Lord.

## Proverbs 4:1-2

<sup>1</sup> Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. <sup>2</sup> For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.

What it means to be a teaching father:

### A. Teaching is intentional.

Teaching doesn't happen by accident – it takes planning, presence, and purpose.

A godly father must *make time* to instruct, explain, and apply God's Word in everyday life.

- You don't have to be a seminary graduate, but you do need to be spiritually engaged.
- 1. "Teach them diligently" (Deut. 6:6-7) – not occasionally, not casually, but intentionally, woven into daily life.
- 2. "Train up a child" (Prov. 22:6) – The word for "train up" (חנך) means to initiate, dedicate, or start a direction with purpose. This speaks to deliberate, early shaping – not passive waiting.
- 3. "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures" (2 Tim. 3:14-15 – speaking of Timothy) – Paul commends Timothy's early and intentional spiritual instruction – which, contextually (2 Tim. 1:5), came from his family.

### B. Teaching begins at home.

#### Deuteronomy 6:7

<sup>7</sup> And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

The home is the first classroom. Every meal, car ride, and bedtime conversation is an opportunity to shape a child's view of God, truth, and life.

### **C. Teaching doesn't delegate the spiritual responsibility to someone else.**

Proverbs 1:8

<sup>8</sup> My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

Others may help: grandparents, church, Christian friends and/or family – but the primary call rests on the father and mother.

- God gave your children to you. Don't assume someone else will do the teaching.

Fathers, what are your children learning from you? Whether you're aware of it or not, you're always teaching. The question is – are you teaching them what matters most?

## **IV. H – HONORING – 1 CORINTHIANS 10:31**

1 Corinthians 10:31 (This gives the overarching principle of honoring God in all areas of life.)

<sup>31</sup> Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

### **A. What does it mean to “honor” someone?**

1. The Hebrew word used (כָּבֵד) means to be heavy or to carry weight.
2. In the context of honoring someone, it means to give weight to their presence, their position, and their words – to treat them as significant, worthy of respect, and deserving of obedience.

3. So, to "honor the Lord" is not just to speak well of Him, but to treat Him as weighty – as the most important person in your life, whose will carries more weight than anyone else's.

➤ *In other words: what God says matters most – and a godly father lives like it.*

## **B. What it means for a father to be honoring:**

1. He honors God in what's most important in his life – Prov. 3:9.

Proverbs 3:9

<sup>9</sup> Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

- a) He puts God first in every area – time, money, decisions, work, etc.
- b) His family sees that God is not an accessory to life, but the anchor of it.
- c) Church, prayer, and obedience aren't optional or occasional – they are essential.

2. He honors God by example and expectation.

- a) Deuteronomy 6 connects loving God personally with teaching children diligently.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7

<sup>5</sup> And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might...<sup>7</sup> And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children...

- b) You can't expect your children to honor what you treat casually.
- c) If they see you speak reverently of God,

prioritize His Word, and live humbly before Him, they'll begin to understand what it means to live a life that honors Him.

- This is also what's behind "*My son, give me thine heart...*" (Prov. 23:26) – the father pleads for a child's loyalty not just to himself, but to the values that shape his own life.

3. He teaches his children to honor God and others.

- a) God's name – don't take it lightly or use it flippantly.
- b) God's Word – treat it as truth, not opinion.
- c) God's people – show respect to those who serve the Lord.

- A home that honors God is shaped by a father who honors God.

## V. E – EXAMPLE – PROVERBS 20:7

A godly father leads by the life he lives. His character, choices, and consistency become a model for his children to follow.

Proverbs 20:7

<sup>7</sup> The just *man* walketh in his integrity: his children *are* blessed after him.

What it means for a father to be an example:

### A. His life speaks louder than his words.

Titus 2:7

<sup>7</sup> In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *showing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

1. Although the text in Titus is speaking directly to

the pastor (Titus, in this case), this is a basic Bible principle.

*"Shewing thyself a pattern..."* means you are the mold by which others are shaped.

2. Children may not remember every lesson we teach, but they will not forget the life we live.
3. Our actions either confirm or contradict our words.

**B. His godly example provides stability and clarity – Prov. 20:7**

This verse emphasizes that a father's consistent walk of integrity leads to a blessing for his children – not just materially, but morally, emotionally, and spiritually.

1. Stability: a steady life creates a safe environment.
  - a) Children thrive in environments where values don't shift with moods.
  - b) When a father is dependable in character, conduct, and convictions, his children feel secure – they know what to expect.
  - c) A stable example gives a child the confidence to explore life's challenges without fearing that the ground will shift beneath them.
- A father who is steady in the Lord provides his children with something the world never can: a sense of being firmly grounded.
2. Clear direction: a consistent life reduces confusion.

- a) A child shouldn't have to guess what's right and what's wrong.
- b) Confusion arises when a child hears, "*Love your neighbor,*" but sees anger and selfishness at home.  
Or when they hear, "*Put God first,*" but see God always placed second to work, hobbies, or comfort.
- A godly example clarifies expectations and shows what obedience looks like in everyday life.

**C. An example is both visible and able to be imitated.**

1 Corinthians 11:1

<sup>1</sup> Be ye followers [μυμητής] of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

1. Paul invited others to imitate him (the definition of the Greek word for "followers") as *he followed Christ*.
2. Our goal shouldn't be success – it should be faithfulness in pursuit of Christ.
3. Don't just say, "*Do what's right.*" Live in a way that says, "*Follow me as I follow Christ.*"

**D. A godly father sets the pattern:**

1. In Prayer: dependence on God is essential.
2. In Use of time: God's priorities deserve our time.
3. In Speech: words are powerful and should be used wisely.

4. In Service: faith is not just belief – it is also an action.
- Nothing confuses or disillusion children more than a father who talks about God but lives like He doesn't matter.

## VI. R – RIGHTEOUS – PSALM 112:1-2

A godly father pursues righteousness – he lives under God's rule, walks in holiness, and seeks to leave a legacy of godliness.

### Psalm 112:1-2

<sup>1</sup> Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man *that* feareth the LORD, *that* delighteth greatly in his commandments.

<sup>2</sup> His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

### A. A righteous father fears the Lord.

"Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD..."

Righteousness begins with a right view of God – holy, sovereign, and worthy of obedience.

### B. A righteous father delights in God's commands

"...that delighteth greatly in His commandments"

1. Not just obedience, but joyful, wholehearted submission.
  2. Righteousness is not hesitant – it's glad-hearted devotion to the will of God.
- Our children will notice if God's Word is a burden to us – or a delight.

### C. A righteous father leaves a legacy of strength and blessing.

"His seed shall be mighty upon earth."

"The generation of the upright shall be blessed."

1. The impact of a righteous life extends far beyond that one particular man – it touches children and grandchildren, shaping their spiritual path in life.
  2. This mirrors Proverbs 13:22 – "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children..."
- Righteousness isn't just about what you do – it's about who you're becoming under God's authority. A righteous father walks with God today so that his children may be blessed tomorrow.

Conclusion: When a father lives this kind of life – faithful, admonishing, teaching, honoring, setting an example, and walking in righteousness – he not only shapes the present but blesses the future.

The greatest joy a father can experience is not in his child's accomplishments, wealth, or popularity – but in their righteousness. To see your children walk with God, to hear them speak His truth, to watch them raise their own families in the fear of the Lord – that is a joy that no earthly success can match.

But that kind of righteous child is rarely raised by accident. Behind them, more often than not, is a father who walked faithfully before God and modeled what it meant to live for something greater than himself.

There are little eyes upon you,  
And they're watching night and day  
There are little ears that listen  
To every word you say.  
There are little hands all eager

To do the things you do;  
And a little boy who's dreaming  
Of the day he'll be like you.  
You're the little fellow's idol,  
You're the wisest of the wise;  
In his little mind, about you  
No suspicions ever rise.  
He believes in you devoutly,  
Holds that all you say and do  
He will say and do in your way  
When he's grown up just like you.  
There's a wide-eyed little fellow  
Who believes you're always right;  
And his ears are always open  
As he watches day and night.  
You are setting an example  
Every day in all you do,  
For the little boy who's waiting  
To grow up to be like you.

—Edgar A. Guest