

SESSION 4



**A REAL MAN BETTERS GOD'S
WORLD: *HIS CHILDREN***

B

1. What You Do with Your Children Matters

A. What you teach your children will govern your impact on God's world as much as anything else.

"Can anyone tell me anything more important than this? What man shall marry what woman, and what shall be the first things taught to their children?" - GK Chesterton

- The Bible teaches that children are like arrows in the hands of a skilled archer. As dad, we fire these arrows. The metaphor gets at the **missional** aspect of raising a child.
- God wants us to love and enjoy our children, but He has commanded us to train them so they can impact the world wherever they go.

Psalm 127:4:

"Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth."

- One of the foremost texts on training children is Deuteronomy 6.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

B. God's plan for your children is generational **obedience** and **prosperity**.

- God intends for your children to learn from you to be obedient to His Word and consequently to experience the prosperity of covenant blessing.
- In other words, God intends for your children to be a blessing to His world.

Deuteronomy 6:2-3:

"that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey."

2. Your Children Need an Example—Dad, You're It!

A. Men, leadership begins with being an **example**.

1 Peter 5:2-3:

"Peter tells the elders, 'shepherd the flock of God that is among you,...

- Parenting begins with **modeling**. Modeling has priority over telling. We must live out certain things before our children.
“If you want to improve the child, consider first improving the parent.”
- - Howard Hendricks

B. Moses tells the men of Israel to be examples of two things. We are to be the visible, bodily example of two loves. Let’s make that more personal. Men, you and I are to be an example of two things – two loves:

- Love the **Lord**...
Deuteronomy 6:5:
“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”
- This means you love God with:
 - Your **heart**. This is your desires, affections, and choices.
 - Your Soul. This is your mental and emotional capacities; your thinking and attitudes.
 - Your **strength**. This is all your activity, what you put your hand to.
- We are to love the Lord with all, all, all of our being.
“Men, let me ask you something. Do your children look at you and see a great love for our Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Do they see a love for our Lord Jesus Christ? Do they look at you and see what it is to love Him more than anything?”
- And love His **Word**...
Deuteronomy 6:6:
“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.”
- As fathers, we must be the incarnation of, or example of, a love for God’s Word—showing that it is written on our hearts—the seat of affection and choices.
- The Psalmist said,
Psalms 119:97:
“Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day”
- Notice that the Psalmist appears to say that love for God’s Word translates into meditation on it all day.
- Do you meditate on His Word? Do you read it? **Memorize** it? Study it and share it?
- Do your children see how your mind is frequently consumed with God’s Word?
“As fathers, we are to model two loves – the love of God and the love of His Law before the eyes of our children. And that must precede our instruction. We are to live the very principles we want to teach our children, beginning with loving the Lord and loving His Word.”

3. Your Children Need a Teacher—Dad, You’re It!

Deuteronomy 6:7-9:

“You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in

your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

A. What does the author mean by “teach them diligently?” The word “teach” means to “impress.” It was often used of an artist or engraver, with hammer and chisel, etching a text or image into the face of a granite slab. Fathers, we are to similarly chisel the principles of God’s Word onto the hearts and minds of our children.

- This “impressing” is both **systematic** and **spontaneous**.
- Systematic impressing requires planning, good materials, and diligence.
- Spontaneous instruction demands sensitivity to **opportunities**. Those opportunities are many!

B. This systematic and spontaneous impressing, or teaching, largely takes place in the home.

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- Notice that the spiritual formation of our children is a **constant** activity. You talk to them:
 1. When you sit.
 2. When you **walk**.
 3. When you lie down.
 4. When you **rise**.
- The spiritual formation of your children is a constant, daily activity. When you start the day – when you rise. When you end your day – when you lie down. When you walk or sit. These things encompass your entire day.
- Moses is assuming close **proximity** to our children. He assumes we are with our children throughout the day.

C. There is greater distance in the home today in the American culture than there ever has been anywhere.

- The drive for more and better things has mom and dad occupied. Conformity to education norms has children stressed, anxious, and occupied.
- We must remember that error increases with **distance**.
- You cannot parent effectively from a **distance**. If I am going to be a good father, I must be with my children early and often.
“The curse of fatherhood is distance, and good fathers spend their lives trying to overcome it.” - James Carroll
- As men, we must figure out how to minimize that distance. No one else in this world will **fight** that distance for your family. You must do it.
“A man who doesn’t spend time with his family can never be a real man.” - Don Vito Corleone in The Godfather

4. Your Children Need a Guide—Dad, You’re It!

Deuteronomy 6:8-9:

“You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

A. Moses ends where he began—modeling the truth we are to teach to our children. Your life is the most important part of the spiritual formation of your children. Your modeling must be consistent.

- The key here is **integrity**.
- In verse 8, Moses references our “*hand*” and “*forehead*.” What does he mean?
 1. Hand = **Actions**
 2. Forehead = **Attitudes**
- In verse 9, Moses references our “*doorpost*” and “*gate*.” What does he mean?
 1. Doorpost = **Private** Life
 2. Gate = **Public** Life
- Notice the consistency Moses calls for...
 1. Your **actions** and **attitudes** must both conform to God’s truth.
 2. Your **private** and **public** life must be consistent with God’s truth.
- The same Scripture you teach your children, you must also live out in your public and private lives.

B. Our word “*integrity*” stems from the Latin word ‘*integer*’ which means whole and complete (an integer is a whole number – no fraction). Integrity requires a ‘wholeness’ or consistency of character.

- A fragmented or broken character is a lack of **integrity**.
- Moses is saying there must be **integrity** (or wholeness) in your life with respect to God’s Word.
- God’s Word must govern your private and public attitudes and actions.
- Inconsistency in these is **hypocrisy**, and it sends a twisted message to your children.
- What does hypocrisy in the Christian life look like? Do as I say, not as I do...
 1. Preaching **generosity** but practicing greed.
 2. Preaching kindness but being **angry** and mean.
 3. Preaching servanthood but practicing selfishness.
 4. Preaching **holiness** but practicing worldliness.
 5. Preaching forgiveness but harboring resentment.
- Almost 70% of young adults who attend church in their teens no longer attend. When asked, “Why?” The top response was, “*I never saw my family actually practice what they professed to believe...*”

- C. **God's plan is for generational prosperity. He intends our children to learn from us to obey His Word and experience the prosperity of covenant blessing.**
- Men, that begins and ends with you. Your example. Your **instruction**. Your proximity. And your integrity. You're just the man for the job.

5. Your Children Need Your Blessing—Dad, You're It!

A. Fathers can and should bless their children.

- What is a father's **blessing**? A father's blessing is giving authorization and empowering your children to grow in Christlikeness.
- When you receive a father's blessing, you receive the permission and affirmation to become the person God has designed you to be.
- The father's blessing is not only words of affirmation but intentional instruction that will set a child on the right **path**.
- IMPORTANT: True blessings are not tied to **performance** or a life event!
- Good fathers deliver words of love and affirmation because of who their child is, not because of what they do. This is exactly how God did it: *"and behold, a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'" - God (Matt 3:17)*

B. You see these types of blessings throughout Scripture:

- God to Abraham (Genesis 12)
- Isaac to Jacob (Genesis 27)
- Jacob to his sons (Genesis 49)
- David to Solomon (1 Kings 2)
- God to Jesus (Matthew 3)
- Paul to Timothy (1 Timothy 1; 2 Timothy 2)
 - God uses these blessings to shape a person's present and future hopes.
 - These blessings were always intended to pass primarily through the **father**! Nothing compares to a Father's Blessing!

C. A blessing is not consent.

- Consent is when a father allows his child to do what they want. A blessing is when you have the endorsement of your father to live as you should. *"Biblically, the blessing is like saying, 'I love you. I affirm you. I am putting my name on you.' The blessing gives the child access to everything his/her father has. The blessing gives the child everything they need to live a God honoring life..." - Chris Harper*

D. As fathers, we bless our children by...

- Sharing words of acceptance and love. Simply being present does not communicate a blessing. A blessing is received when it is spoken verbally. *"For a child in search of the blessing, silence communicates confusion. Children who are left to fill in the blanks when it comes to what their parents think about them will often feel insecure. Spoken or written words at least give the child an indication that they are worthy of some attention." - Dr. John Trent*

"I Love You. Those three words, spoken with sincerity and backed up by

behavior, can demonstrate support, encouragement, tenderness, and caring as much as anything else we do as fathers.” - The National Center for Fathering

- Displaying an active commitment. Our actions must match our words (blessing).
“Words alone cannot communicate the blessing; they need to contain a willingness to do everything possible to help the one blessed be successful. We can tell a child, ‘You have the talent to be a very good pianist’. But if we neglect to provide a piano for that child to practice on, our lack of commitment has undermined our message.” - Dr. John Trent
- Proclaiming a promised future. As fathers, we must help our children see a future that is full of hope and opportunity. Giving our children a sense of security now enables them to grow in confidence to serve God and others in the future.

Job 11:18-19:

“You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety.”

“They say a person needs just three things to be truly happy in this world: someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for.” - Tom Bodett

Your Table Discussion Questions

1. Did you have a “good” dad growing up? What made him a “good” dad? If not, what made him a poor excuse for a father? Explain.
2. The Puritans often said, “*The father is the chief priest of his home.*” It is dad’s job to usher his family into the presence of God (through singing, Bible reading, prayer, etc.). Are you serving as a *good* priest? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever received a father’s blessing? How did it make you feel? Have you ever given a father’s blessing? Do you think it’s important? Explain.

Your “BetterMan” Reflection:

Before our next session, take a moment this week to reflect on your notes and then answer the following question: “*What are 2-3 things I can do to better lead my family in worshipping and loving King Jesus?*” Write your answer below.