

Remnant Life Church  
June 18, 2017  
**A Portrait of Fatherhood**  
Father's Day  
I Thess 2:7-12

- For the longest time the role and measure of a man was primarily defined and identified by one thing – money – and with it position and power
  - And we can easily see the changing perception of a man in the television programs of a particular time
    - In the 50's the man was portrayed on television as Danny Thomas, Ward Cleaver, and Jim Anderson – steady, dependable, and sensitive; “Father Knows Best”
    - In the 60's it was Andy Griffith, Rob Petrie, and Ben Cartwright – wise, able to flow with the circumstances, and with a sense of humor
    - In the 70's that image began to change – Archie Bunker, Fred Sanford, George Jefferson, Hawkeye Pierce, and Howard Cunningham – a broad and diverse portrayal; men of emotional extremes and not so reliable as they once were
    - In the 80's it was JR Ewing, Jack Tripper, Cliff Huxtable, Sam Malone, and Harry Anderson – men with responsibilities but most with a dark, even hidden side with great frailties
    - The 90's brought us Tim Allen, Frazier Crane, Jerry Seinfeld, Ray Romano, Joey, Ross, and Chandler – men were being portrayed, by and large, as being fools and bumbler, always creating ridiculous situations for themselves to have to deal with
    - At the turn of the century homosexuality, infidelity, addiction, and abuse are featured regularly as men, and even the family unity itself, are further torn down
  - This is a far cry from who and what God created a man to be
  - But we did not start out well
    - **Gen 3:6** - *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.*
    - Notice what it says, “...gave some to her husband who was with her...”
    - Adam stood by silently while Eve was tempted, watched as she gave in, and then participated himself
      - This is the very picture of an emasculated and weak man
      - WE blew it from the very beginning, guys!
      - And we have been dealing with the consequences ever since
- There was a time, not all that long ago, when you could look at a person from a distance and, by their appearance only, tell what gender they were

- But the goal today is to obliterate the gender line
- Fashions, jewelry, makeup, hair, jobs, family roles are today completely interchangeable
  - And it is to our detriment
- Now...it is right about this point that men start to squirm a little and women start trying to determine if they want to get mad or not
  - Genders are NOT the same
  - Man and woman were created different and no amount of political correctness can change that
  - WATCH – different is NOT defined as better or worse
    - Different simply means not the same
  - But the culture of today is actively trying to destroy the gender line so that now little boys are being encouraged to play with dolls and embrace their ‘feminine side’ while little girls are being told that to even consider a life as a wife and mother, without pursuing and achieving a career, is to degrade themselves in the worst way possible
- But I am here this morning men, on Father’s Day, to talk about us
  - Whether you are a physical father or not you, as a Christian man, have a responsibility to model a good father wherever you go
  - What are the traits that make up that model?
  - Look at several given by Paul but not an exhaustive list

**READ – I Thess 2:7-12**

1. Express Genuine Love (2:8a)

- a. *We loved you so much*
- b. In the Greek Paul’s words mean to long for
  - i. Love today, even in families, is often bought
  - ii. To long for something means that you WANT to express love
- c. Many, if not most men, find that very difficult
- d. For most it is because their own fathers did not express love and affection to them
  - i. Their dad was the Archie Bunker type who would push his son-in-law away when he tried to hug him
- e. But this is why God issues the command “*husbands love your wives*” (Eph 5:25)
  - i. For most men it must be learned
  - ii. It does not come easily
- f. Men the best thing you can do to teach your children to be loving is to love their mother with open, genuine affection
  - i. You say your kids are too old but it is never too late!
- g. Because the second-best thing you can do is to be affectionate with your children
- h. (Affection with my boys)



A few years ago the cartoon strip, “For Better or for Worse,” showed Dad coming into the room where his teenage daughter was sitting on the couch watching television & eating popcorn. So he decided to sit down next to her & help himself to the popcorn. As he was sitting there, a little thought balloon appears over his head. He’s thinking, “I remember when she was so young. I held her in my arms & loved her, & it was so wonderful. Now look at her. She’s all grown up, & such a beautiful girl, too. I wonder what she would think if I held her like I used to & told her again that I love her?” He finally concludes that she would probably think he was treating her like a little girl if he did that.

While he’s thinking that, his daughter is thinking, “I wonder why Dad never hugs me anymore?”

- i. Men – openly express your love for your family in a genuine way

## 2. Live a Transparent Life (2:8b)

- a. *...we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well*
- b. Notice the connection between the words “gospel” and “lives”
  - i. It is one thing to tell people so they hear the gospel
  - ii. It is another thing to actually demonstrate it in the way you live
- c. It’s a very simple question
  - i. Do your children know you are a godly man, a Christian, simply by watching the way you live?
  - ii. A step further – work? Friends? The gym? In the store?
- d. This is seen by your values, what you say and do at home, what you allow into your home, how you handle problems, stress, disappointment, and... by how much you love
- e. **John 13:34-35** - *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*
- f. But, admittedly, transparency is not always easy...

In 1986 Robert Fulghum wrote a best-selling book titled, “All I Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten.” In a follow-up book he then talks about grown children coming home again. He says that often when grown kids come back home, they will and laugh reminisce about things they got away with when they were younger, that mom & dad never found out about. He recalls that on one visit his own children began reminiscing. His oldest son said, “Dad, when I was 14 & you & mom were gone for a while, I went out to the garage & got in the car, started it up, backed it out, drove it around the block several times, & then put it back. And you never knew it.”

Everybody laughed, & then his other son spoke up, “Another time when you & mom went to the grocery store, we kids went out in the back yard & smoked a cigar. You came home early & we thought for sure we’d been caught. But you never knew & we got away with it.” Once again everybody laughed.

Then Fulghum said to his children, “You know you didn’t know some of the things your mom & I got away with. For instance, you never knew that we took a cut off all the money grandma sent you at Christmas. You never knew that sometimes when we told you we weren’t eating leftovers, that they really were leftovers just made to look like something else.” “You never knew that when you called me from camp & you were so homesick, & I told you that I missed you, too and wished you were home, that wasn’t entirely accurate.”

- g. We laugh at these, maybe even wince a little bit, but a father and a husband who is willing to be transparent with his life builds trust and security
  - i. Men, fight that urge to portray the macho man who never makes a mistake
  - ii. Own your weaknesses and in that begin to gain the strength that comes from having no facades and barriers between you and your family

### 3. An Unselfish Work Ethic (2:9)

- a. *Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.*
- b. The word here is “unselfish”, not “obsessive”
- c. Too many of our children are ignored because of the all-encompassing need to succeed and achieve – NOT that extreme either!
- d. But a lazy man is one who destroys the foundation of his home
  - i. *Lazy hands make for poverty... – (Prov 10:4)*
  - ii. Poverty in the Hebrew means to lack but also to impoverish oneself – you’re hurting yourself
- e. Our children learn primarily in one of two ways – by example or by doing
  - i. (My story of junior high wood shop project for Dad’s writing box) – 45 years ago
  - ii. Our work ethic should be a strong one but it should never overwhelm or overshadow our children
  - iii. They, like us, need to learn from their mistakes

### 4. Demonstrate Genuine Spirituality (2:10)

- a. *You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed*
- b. Men – God commissioned you to be the spiritual heads of your home
- c. Whether you think you are or not, whether you want to believe it or not
- d. You will either lead your family closer to God or take them further away
- e. That begins by demonstrating genuine spirituality – what does that mean?
  - i. NJOS – Not Just on Sunday
  - ii. Pray, read the Bible with your children, with your wife
  - iii. **Psalms 1:2** – calls us to meditate on God’s Word day and night – meditate is to dwell on
- f. When you do this you are demonstrating a godly life-style that your children will see and have imprinted into their hearts and minds



5. A Positive Influence (2:11-12)

- a. *For you know 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.*
  - b. This is what a godly father, a godly husband, a godly man does – creates a positive environment
  - c. The Total Man – Dan Benson (1977)
    - i. For every positive word spoken by dads to their kids they speak 10 negative ones
    - ii. Words like don't, you can't, stop that, and no come very easily – not so the ones of encouragement, comfort, and praise
    - iii. The author goes on to say that the entire personality and dynamic of relationships between fathers and their children could change if those percentages were reversed
  - d. Jesus brought correction to His disciples but He also encouraged them
  - e. Laughter and joy encourages those around us
  - f. **Prov 17:22** – a merry heart is good like a medicine
- There is no doubt that it is not easy to be a man of God in today's culture (or a woman of God for that matter)
    - But easy or not does not change who we are called to be
    - God designated you, men, to be the head of your home
    - The problem is that we have done it so poorly for so long that those we have been called to love, protect, and provide for cannot trust us to do it
    - Because, like Adam, we continue to abdicate our responsibility by standing by silently
  - Sadly, the world's definition of what a real man is has infiltrated the church and perverted the true definition
    - A godly man model's himself after Jesus Christ
    - He is humble, a servant, gentle, temperate, disciplined, and selfless
    - How many of those traits describe you this morning?
  - If the Holy Spirit has been speaking to your heart this morning and you know you need to improve in these areas – stand to be prayed for
    - Aren't we going to close our eyes first?
    - Pride brings that question to your mind – humbling yourself and admitting your weakness is the first step toward your place of godly strength and authority.