

Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



Walking in the Way of a Father

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Kings 21:10-12, 18-22 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: Mark 9:36-37; 10:14 | Romans 3:23

SUMMARY

Being a dad is a great privilege, but it's also an awesome responsibility.

Fathers obviously have a tremendous influence on their families; but as a whole, they also determine the course of a nation. If a young man grows up without a dad, his chance of going to prison rises two-fold. And when fathers walk away from their responsibilities, the entire family suffers. Whatever pathway a father walks—whether good or bad—his children are likely to follow.

SERMON POINTS

In the Old Testament, there's a story of an evil king in Judah who gives a warning to every father (2 Kings 21:11-12).

Manasseh was wicked by Jewish standards, but he acted even more abominably than the pagan Amorites. Not only did he commit great sin personally, but he also made Judah sin with his idols. Because of Manasseh's evil leadership, the Lord pronounced that great calamity would fall on Judah. After Manasseh died, his son Amon became king and followed in his father's footsteps by forsaking the Lord and worshiping idols (21:20-22).

Since young children admire their dads and want to be like them, fathers must carefully consider what kind of example they are leaving for their children. As Christians, we are to follow Christ's pattern. When other people saw children as insignificant, He became indignant and said, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom

of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14). Jesus loves His children and wants to be involved in their lives. If we have this same attitude, our example can draw our children to Jesus.

Questions for Fathers

The following questions are designed to help fathers determine what kind of example they are leaving for their kids.

If your children follow in your footsteps, will they ...

- **Have a strong desire to discover and fulfill God's will for their lives?** Obedience to the Lord doesn't come naturally. Children need a father's instruction and correction. He must start early and make sure they understand what it means to trust Christ as their Savior. Then throughout their lives, he needs to guide and teach them how to walk in God's will and intervene when they are being influenced by the wrong kinds of friends or activities.
- **Live lives of faith, focused on God, trusting Him for their needs?** It's easy for children to think of their dads as the ones who provides for them. However, no one knows what the future may hold. Financial challenges are an opportunity for fathers to teach their children that God is the ultimate Provider. Otherwise, they will live in fear and anxiety instead of confident trust that the Lord will take care of them no matter what their family's economic situation may be.
- **Be industrious?** Fathers should teach their kids to set goals and do what's required to fulfill them. And the best way to pass on this lesson

is by example. When a child sees his father get up every day and leave for his job, he learns the importance of work. If he watches his dad always put forth his best effort at whatever he does, the child will more than likely follow his example of diligence. However, if a dad is lazy, his children may grow up with this same bad habit.

- **Have the wisdom to live today with tomorrow in mind?** God wants His people to enjoy life, but at the same time, understand that a day is coming when they must give an account to Christ for how they lived. If dads teach this truth to their children early in life, it will protect them from foolishly living only for today.
- **Be encouragers who lift up other people?** Fathers should exemplify this quality by not making critical or negative remarks about others. In addition, they need to encourage their children instead of being overly critical and hard to please. Children learn encouragement by hearing their parents make positive comments to them and about others.
- **Have prayer lives that are genuine, diligent, and based on God's Word?** Instead of telling children to pray, fathers should pray with them. As they hear their dads talk to the Lord, they learn how to address Him and what to ask. And when a father is vulnerable before God, sharing his needs, concerns, and struggles in prayer, his children learn what a relationship with the Lord looks like.
- **Hunger for the Word of God, seeking to live according to its principles, and developing a relationship with the Lord?** Children should learn very early in life that the Bible is God's guidebook for living. They need their own copy of the Scriptures in a version they can understand, but fathers should also read the Word with them and explain what it means. They need to be taught that God has an answer in His Word for every problem they will ever face.
- **Seek to personally lead others to Christ?** Evangelism isn't just for adults. Fathers can encourage their children to become witnesses for

Christ by helping them learn how to present the Gospel message to their friends.

- **Faithfully serve the Lord through their local church?** Dads have the responsibility to be actively involved in a church and to teach their children that this is a vital part of God's will for their lives. It's not enough to send children to church; they need to learn from their parents' example that attendance, service, and giving are a priority.
- **Recognize their body as the temple of the Holy Spirit?** Fathers should teach their children that their bodies are sacred vessels with which they are to honor and glorify God. Since the world promotes a variety of practices that harm or defile their bodies, dads need the courage to confront their children if they are not honoring God with the way they dress or behave.
- **Live and work in the power of the Holy Spirit?** When children see their fathers actively using their spiritual gifts and relying upon the Spirit for strength, they learn that God also has a purpose for their lives and wants to empower them to accomplish His will.

RESPONSE

- In what ways have you followed the path of your earthly father? What are some of the good examples your dad left for you? If there were any negative patterns, what are you doing to make sure that you are not repeating them or passing them on to your children?
- If you are a father, what qualities do you most want to pass down to your children? How are you modeling these for them? What changes would you like to make in order to become a more Christlike example?

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