

Father's Day

1 Thessalonians 2:11

What if I could tell you that there was a way to guarantee that your children will be:

- 5 times less likely to commit suicide;
- 32 times less likely to run away;
- 20 times less likely to have behavioral disorders;
- 14 times less likely to commit rape;
- 9 times less likely to drop out of high school;
- 10 times less likely to abuse chemical substances;
- and 9 times less likely to end up in state-operated institutions?

Would you be interested in finding out the secret? Here it is
-THE PRESENCE OF A FATHER IN THE HOME.

1 Thessalonians 2:11 – "Just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children" (NASB)

The presence of a Father in the home makes a tremendous difference in a child's future. According to a Gallup Father's Day Poll, 40% of men between the ages of 18-49 feel that their father was their greatest parental influence as compared to just 23% of men over 50.

Simply defined . . . A father is a male parent. Biblically defined . . . He is much more. When we take a Bible in our hands, we are actually holding a user's manual for fathers. Story after story, it reveals our heavenly Father's love for his Son—and for us. It also shares the accounts of earthly fathers

whose examples we'll want to either imitate or avoid. In the Bible we see both good fathers and bad fathers . . . Not so unlike what we see around us today.

The message is clear-the presence of a father in the home makes a positive difference in a child's life. That is also the tone set in scripture. The Bible assumes the positive influence of the father. Jesus taught us to refer to God as "Our Father who art in heaven . . ." God is our Father . . . And, He is in Heaven. By Jesus' question in **Matthew 7:9** we see that he assumed that a Father will always have a child's best interest at heart. He asked: "Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone?" In our text today, Paul was looking for an analogy to compare his work to and the analogy he chose was the father/child relationship. He used three words to describe the father's role, "exhorting (advise earnestly) and encouraging (give hope or confidence, to stimulate) and imploring (request earnestly)." All three of those words imply an intensity. We advise, we motivate and we give instruction, and we do all those things with intensity, because we know their importance.

Ephesians 6:4 says, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." There are two commands in this text, one is negative, the other positive. On the negative side, we are not to exasperate our children. In other words, our discipline cannot crush their spirit or demean them. It is a thin line, that most of us have crossed. It is the difference between encouragement and discouragement.

Two thoughts for fathers:

1. Live so that your children, when people tell them that they remind them of you, will stick out their chest . . . And not their tongues.
2. Your family is the only one of your possessions that you can take to Heaven

Sometimes, I believe it is OK to take some time off from instructing our children and simply enjoy them. In his book, *Being a Good Dad When You Didn't Have One*, Tim Wesemann gives his readers a two-word piece of advice: "Lighten up!" He says that adults laugh an average of 15 times a day while children laugh 400 times. "Somewhere between childhood and adulthood, we lose 385 laughs a day! That's a great loss!" Wesemann says, "Maybe we need not only the faith of a child but the funny bone of one as well."

Ecclesiastes 3:4 does say that there is "A time to weep, and a time to laugh . . ." (NASB) Our relationship doesn't have to be intense all the time, sometimes it can be an opportunity just to enjoy the people our children are . . . And are becoming.

There is also a positive command here. Something fathers are to do. It is God's will for Fathers to train and instruct their children in the ways of the Lord.

Sonora Dodd, of Washington, first had the idea of a "father's day." **She thought of the idea for Father's Day while listening to a Mother's Day sermon in 1909.**

Sonora wanted a special day to honor her father, William Smart. Smart, who was a Civil War veteran, was widowed when his wife died while giving birth to their sixth child. Mr. Smart was left to raise the newborn and his other five children by himself on a rural farm in eastern Washington state.

After Sonora became an adult she realized the selflessness her father had shown in raising his children as a single parent. It was her father that made all the parental sacrifices and was, in the eyes of his daughter, a courageous, selfless, and loving man. Sonora's father was born in June, so she chose to hold the first Father's Day celebration in Spokane, Washington on the 19th of June, 1910.

President Calvin Coolidge, in 1924, supported the idea of a national Father's Day. Then in 1966 President Lyndon Johnson signed a presidential proclamation declaring the 3rd Sunday of June as Father's Day. President Richard Nixon signed the law which finally made it permanent in 1972 (just 35 years ago). And now, each third Sunday in June families pause and reflect on that member of the family . . . The one they know as the compliment of their mother . . . their father. I am thankful for the insight and efforts of Sonora Dodd in helping families to celebrate a special day for fathers.

CONCLUSION:

Permit me to tell you something that I have never told an audience before: Mother's Day and Father's Day sermons are somewhat challenging for me to prepare since I grew up with neither my father or my mother from which to draw personal analogies as many sermonators do.. Nonetheless, I try. Through the years I have come to realize that:

- Sometimes fathers can be pretty hard on themselves, feeling that they have not done the job they should have done with their children.
- Sometimes fathers give so much energy to their profession and job, that they have very little energy left for their children.

- Sometimes fathers wait until it is too late before realizing how quickly their children are growing up.
- Sometimes fathers try to give their children things, when what the children really want is them.
- Sometimes a father doesn't try as hard as he could because he sees his wife doing such a wonderful job with their children without more effort from him.

ILLUSTRATION: The true story of the young man who said, "I wish my father was dead . . . In fact, I tried to kill him." Told him to go back home . . . And first thing, walk up to his dad . . . Give him a great big hug and tell him you love him . . . Step back and see what happens." I can only imagine the changes in their relationship that took place that day.

- "It doesn't matter who my father was; it matters who I remember he was." -- *Anne Sexton*
- "One father is more than a hundred schoolmasters." -- *English Proverb*
- It isn't hard to father a child . . . But it is challenging to be a good father

The greatest of all to be called "Father" is our Heavenly Father. Have you become His child?

God's Plan for Man's Salvation