

Celebrating Father's Day

Malachi 4:6

INTRODUCTION:

- A. **Happy Father's Day!** Today is Father's Day, a day in which we honor our fathers. A small boy said, "Father's Day is just like Mother's Day, only you don't spend as much on the gift." . . . And many fathers say, "What gift?"
1. **72%** percent of Americans plan to celebrate Father's Day . . . **81.8%** celebrated Mother's Day.
 3. **74.3%** of consumers say that they will buy dad a greeting card.
 4. **36%** will buy a necktie.
 5. **41.6%** plan a special outing with dad.
 6. **8** billion or so will be spent on fathers **10.4** billion was spent on mothers.
 7. The average cost of a Father's Day gift is **\$42.00** The average cost of a Mother's Day gift is **\$63,00**.
 8. Dads, we sometimes don't get a whole lot of respect . . . But you know that, don't you?
- B. Someone composed a list of the five things you will never hear fathers say.
- #5. Well, how 'bout that? . . . I'm lost! Looks like we'll have to stop and ask for directions.
 - #4. Here's a credit card and the keys to my new car -- GO CRAZY.
 - #3. Your Mother and I are going away for the weekend . . . you might want to consider throwing a party.
 - #2. Why would you want to go and get a job for? I make plenty of money for you to spend.
 - #1. Father's Day? aahh -- don't worry about that -- it's no big deal.
- C. **ILLUSTRATION:** Mark Twain said, "When I was a boy of 14 my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to the 21, I was astonished at how much the old man learned in 7 years."
- D. **ILLUSTRATION:** Popular comedian/entertainer Bill Cosby wrote, "Now that my father is a grandfather he just can't wait to give money to my kids. But when I was a kid and I asked him for 50 cents, he would tell me the story of his life. How he got up at 5 a.m. when he was 70-years-old and walked 23 miles to milk 90 cows. And the farmer for whom he worked had no bucket, so he had to squirt the milk into his little hand and then walk 8 miles to the nearest can. All for 5 cents. The result was . . . I never got my 50 cents.
But now he tells my children every time he comes into the house, 'Well, let's see how much money old Granddad has for his wonderful grandkids.' And the minute they take money out of his hands I call them over to me and I snatch it away from them. BECAUSE THAT IS MY MONEY."
- E. **ILLUSTRATION:** Someone wrote these humorous words entitled, "The World According to Dad." These are words that most dads have said at some time or another to their children.
- This is going to hurt me more than it hurts you.
 - Quiet. I'm watching the ball game.
 - Don't forget to check the oil.
 - Bring back all the change.
 - How should I know? Ask your mother.
 - I'm not made out of money!
 - When I was your age I walked 5 miles to and from school each day and it was uphill both ways.

- You are going and you will have fun!
- Who's paying the bills around here, anyway?
- If you break your leg don't come running to me.
- Don't put your feet on the furniture. Your mother will kill you.
- Get down before you kill yourself. On second thought, go ahead.
- Quit playing with your food.
- Be quiet! Can't you see I'm trying to think!
- Why? Because I said so!
- If you don't quit that I'm going to call your mother.
- You better get that junk picked up before your mother comes in here.
- Just wait till you have kids of your own.
- I was not asleep. I was just resting my eyes.

Brethren, I suppose we who are fathers could probably add a couple of quotes to that list. Being a parent and a father can be both an interesting and trying experience.

- F. **ILLUSTRATION:** Someone said, "Parents spend the first part of a child's life urging him to talk and walk, and the rest of his childhood telling him to sit down and keep quiet."
- G. **ILLUSTRATION:** One father said to his teenage son, "Do you mind if I use the car tonight? I'm taking your mother out to eat and I would like to impress her."
- H. According to the Bible, God has an idea of what a Father is suppose to be . . . Society often does not.
1. The question is does our society know? . . . And do we as a church know?
 2. Approximately **20 million** children have been abandoned by their father. That's **10 million** shy of the population of Canada.
 - a. What I mean by abandon is, a lack of spiritual, financial and emotional support.
 - b. They are not there to love them and take care of them, because they are too busy living for the moment. And it's affecting our society. Kids need their father and father's need to show their kids they are loved and wanted.
- I. Both parenting and fatherhood can be a real trial And yet a real blessing.
- J. Brethren, we are here today to remember the Lord and honor our earthly fathers. We need to do both.
- K. Lesson Text: **Malachi 4:6** - (Referring to the coming and work of John the Baptist) "*See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. **He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers . . .***"
- L. In this study I want us to think about some of the things for which we should say, "Thanks, Dad!" Or, give thanks for.
1. Thanks for **material provision**
 2. Thanks for **faithful instruction**
 3. Thanks for **godly example**

1. THANKS FOR MATERIAL PROVISION

1 Timothy 5:8 - "*But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.*"

Wow! That's powerful. If a father does not provide materially for his family (food, clothing, shelter) then he has denied the faith of Christ and is worse than Infidels/unbelievers.

Why would such a father be worse than unbelievers? BECAUSE EVEN INFIDELS OR

UNBELIEVERS PROVIDE FOR THEIR FAMILIES!

What about your father . . . Did he provide for you? He probably did and you need to thank him for it if he is still alive. Or at least, give thanks to God that he did!

ILLUSTRATION: Boyce Mouton of Carl Junction, MO, near Joplin, said these words about his grandfather which I think are appropriate. "My grandfather, R.C. Myers, came from Kentucky. He married a Kansas girl and settled down in Indian territory, which later become Oklahoma.

They had 16 children. It never occurred to my grandfather than the government should take care of his family. That was his responsibility. He was a law officer before statehood, but became a sharecropper in order to feed his family. Their poverty did not discourage him from the personal pride of caring for his own.

He reared his children without the benefit of electricity or running water. He died without ever having a driver's license. His children, nevertheless, grew up to be hard-working, patriotic, and devout. I am confident, that in spite of his poverty, he did a better job of providing for his own than the government."

Thank God for all the fathers who provide as best they can for their families! Thank you, Fathers!

2. THANKS FOR FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

Ephesians 6:4 - *"And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."*

Fathers have given all kinds of instruction to their children about such things as: school, work, relationships, dating, driving a car, etc.

ILLUSTRATION: A man by the name of Jim Burton said this about being a father. "When I was young, baseball was my life. You can imagine the excitement I felt when my oldest son began playing. This game would be one of our main bonding mechanisms. If my son would just listen, I could help him be a great baseball player. Learning to read curve balls, shift his body weight with the swing, steal bases, turn double plays - these things separate the amateurs from the pros."

Burton said, "A pattern developed in our relationship. Because of my familiarity with the game, I saw every mistake my son made. In addition, I knew how to correct them.

So post-game drives home became a critique of how to improve his game. It soon got old for my son. One night he finally said, 'DAD, COULD YOU NOT START BY TELLING ME EVERYTHING I DID WRONG. TELL ME WHAT I DID RIGHT FIRST.'"

Brethren, faithful instruction is important, but we have to be careful how we deliver it. All criticism and no praise is not good. ARE YOU A COACH OR A CRITIC? A good father is a coach. I hope yours was and you are.

One translation of **Ephesians 6:4** reads, "Don't keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful . . ."

ILLUSTRATION: Here is the sad confession of one father. Please listen carefully as I read them to you

"I took my children to school but not to church. I taught them to drink but not of the living water.

I enrolled them in Little League but not Sunday School.

I showed them how to fish but not to be fisher of men.

I made the Lord's Day a holiday, rather than a holy day."

I taught them the church was full of hypocrites and made the greater hypocrite of them and me.

I gave them a color TV but provided no Bible.

I handed them the keys to the car but did not give to them the keys of the kingdom of God.

I taught them how to make a living but failed to bring them to Christ who alone can make a life."

Brothers and sisters, you need to thank your father for the faithful instruction he gave you in life . . . for all the good advice. **And especially, if that instruction included the Lord!**

1. Thanks for **material provision**
2. Thanks for **faithful instruction**

3. THANKS FOR GODLY EXAMPLE

By this, I mean a godly example for life. In **1 Corinthians 11:1** Paul said to the Corinthians who were his children in the faith, "*Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*" Literally, he was saying . . . "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." Please notice: Paul didn't say, "Do everything I do." He said, "Do everything I do which is Christ-like." Or follow the example of Christ. Paul wasn't perfect and neither are we.

Brethren, there are some things that we have done in life that I do not want our children to do. We're sorry when we have given them a bad example. But we have also done some good things, some godly things, some Christ-like things, which we hope they will copy from our lives.

Quotes:

1. Clarence Budington Kelland - "He didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it."
2. Harmon Killebrew "My father used to play with my brother and me in the yard. Mother would come out and say, 'You're tearing up the grass.' 'We're not raising grass,' Dad would reply. 'We're raising boys.'"
3. Author Unknown - "The greatest gift I ever had Came from God; I call him Dad"
4. Author Unknown - "A father carries pictures where his money used to be."
5. Author Unknown - "Dad, your guiding hand on my shoulder will remain with me forever. "

ILLUSTRATION: One man said, "When I was a teenager, Dad would come in my room and say, 'C'mon, kid, let's go.' 'Where to?' 'Lucy's.'"

Once a month Dad would visit Lucy Butchko, a woman whose body was twisted and pinned into a wheelchair by arthritis. He would reach his big arms around her frail body and lift her out of the wheelchair and place her in the front seat of our brown station wagon. Then he would fold the wheelchair, throw it in back, and drive Lucy to the monthly Communion service for shut-ins. Dad was a Vice President of a publishing company who shuttled shut-ins.

Later, while in the hospital, trying to recover from a massive heart attack, dad found out that a family down the street didn't have enough money to buy groceries. So he wrote them a check. **IT WAS THE LAST THING HE EVER WROTE, AND A LASTING LESSON."**

Brethren, all I can say is, **WHAT A FATHER THAN MAN WAS!** And what a great illustration of Christ he was to his son!

ILLUSTRATION: I really like this story One man said of his father, "Once when I was a teenager, my father and I were standing in line to buy tickets for the circus. Finally, there was only one family between us and the ticket counter. This family made a big impression on me. There were 8 children, all probably under the age of 12. You could tell they didn't have a lot of money. Their clothes were not expensive, but they were clean.

The children were well-behaved, all of them standing in line, two-by-two behind their parents, holding hands. They were excitedly jabbering about the clowns, elephants, and other acts they would see that night. One could sense they had never been to a circus before. It promised to be a highlight of their young lives. The father and mother were at the head of the pack standing proud as could be. The mother was holding her husband's hand, looking up at him as if to say, 'You're my knight in shining armor.' He was smiling and basking in pride, looking at her.

The ticket lady asked the father how many tickets he wanted. He proudly said, 'Please, let me buy 8 children's tickets and two adult tickets so I can take my family to the circus.' **THE TICKET LADY QUOTED THE PRICE.** The man's wife let go of his hand, her head dropped and the man's lip began to quiver. The father leaned a little closer and asked, 'HOW MUCH DID YOU SAY?' The ticket lady again quoted the price.

The man didn't have enough money. How was he supposed to turn and tell his 8 kids that he didn't have enough money to take them to the circus? Seeing what was going on, my dad put his hand in his pocket, pulled out a \$20 bill and dropped it on the ground. (And we were not wealthy in any sense of the word) My father reached down, picked up the bill, tapped the man on the shoulder and said, 'EXCUSE ME, SIR, I BELIEVE THIS FELL OUT OF YOUR POCKET.'

The man knew what was going on. He wasn't begging for a handout but certainly appreciated the help in a desperate, heartbreaking, embarrassing situation. He looked straight into my dad's eye, took my dad's hand in both of his, squeezed tightly onto the \$20 bill, and with quivering lips and a tear streaming down his cheek, replied, 'THANK YOU, THANK YOU. **THIS REALLY MEANS A LOT TO ME AND MY FAMILY.'**" **Brethren, the man telling the story about his father, said, "My father and I went back to our car and drove home. We didn't go to the circus that night, but we didn't go without."**

- What a father that man was! What a godly illustration of Christ!
- Fathers, what have you done that allowed your children to see Christ living in you.
- Thank God for all fathers who have been godly illustrations, godly examples to follow!

CONCLUSION:**A. ILLUSTRATION: A Letter to Dad**

There are so many things I'd like
To tell you face to face;
I either lack the words or fail
To find the time and place.

But in this special letter, Dad,
You'll find, at least in part,
The feelings that the passing years
Have left within my heart.

The memories of childhood days
And all that you have done,
To make our home a happy place
And growing up such fun!

I still recall the walks we took,
The games we often played;

Those confidential chats we had
While resting in the shade.

This letter comes to thank you, and,
For needed words of praise;
The counsel and the guidance, too,
That shaped my grown-up days.

No words of mine can tell you, Dad,
The things I really feel;
But you must know my love for you
Is lasting, warm and real.

You made my world a better place,
And through the coming years;
I'll keep these memories of you
As cherished souvenirs.

B. What Is a Father? by Paul Harvey

A father is a person who is forced to endure childbirth without an anesthetic. He growls when he feels good and laughs very loud when he is scared half-to-death.

A father never feels entirely worthy of the worship in a child's eyes. He is never quite the hero his daughter thinks. Never quite the man his son believes him to be. And this worries him sometimes. (So he works too hard to try to smooth the rough places in the road of those of his own who will follow him.)

A father is a person who goes to war sometimes . . . and would run the other way, except that war is part of an important job in his life (which is making the world better for his child than it has been for him).

Fathers grow older faster than other people, because they, in other wars, have to stand at the train station and wave goodbye to the uniform that climbs on board. And, while mothers cry where it shows, fathers stand and beam . . . outside . . . and die inside.

Fathers are men who give daughters away to other men who aren't nearly good enough, so that they can have children that are smarter than anybody's.

Fathers fight dragons almost daily. They hurry away from the breakfast table off to the arena, which is sometimes called an office or a workshop. There they tackle the dragon with three heads — Weariness, Work, and Monotony. And they never quite win the fight, but they never give up.

Knights in shining armor; fathers in shiny trousers. There's little difference as they march away each workday.

I trust that you will be able to honor your father, either in person or as you share with others what's in your memory about your dad. Maybe you'd like to pay tribute to your dad with special words. I hope you dads will be a blessing to your families and that you will be blessed by your families.

C. We have noted (three of the things for which we should say, "Thanks, Dad!" Or give thanks for.

1. **MATERIAL PROVISION**
2. **FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION**
3. **GODLY EXAMPLE**

D. **God's Plan for Man's Salvation**