

SESSION 25 – LOVING A PRODIGAL

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Fatherhood can make a man's life rich, filled with joy and laughter and give a man a lasting sense of gratification and achievement.
2. However, the reality is that being a father and cultivating a family isn't _____.
3. We need men who are willing to embrace the long road of building and _____ a family.

II. FIVE FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS OF FATHERHOOD

1. The family was _____ idea.
 - o The family was God's idea and was part of his purpose for mankind and for how we should relate to one another in this world.

“Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” – Genesis 2:24 (ESV)
 - o God calls children a _____ .

“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.” – Psalm 127:3-5 (ESV)
 - o _____ is not just some added to-do on your list of responsibilities.
2. Fatherhood is a God-given _____ .
 - o God has commissioned and entrusted fathers with the noble task of nurturing, guiding, and equipping their children for life.
 - o This commission is taught directly or implied throughout the Bible. For example: Proverbs 22:6; 29:17; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 3:4.
 - o “Parents ought to consider themselves entrusted with the (temporary) responsibility and stewardship of nurturing and cultivating a child's heart and mind in light of the Scriptures and on behalf of God...[and] while children ought to obey both parents, fathers bear special responsibility for disciplining their children.”
– Andreas K. Kostenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family*

3. Fatherhood takes _____ .

- Authentic Manhood definition, which we discovered from the life of Jesus:
 - Reject Passivity
 - Accept Responsibility
 - Lead Courageously
 - Invest Eternally

4. Wise fathers focus on the _____ .

“Never fully knowing ourselves, never fully knowing others, and never fully finding the abundant life ... We spend our existence toiling to make life happen, and all it gets us is a grave, a marker, and a date.”

- Chip Dodd, *The Voice of the Heart*

- Heart-deficient fathers can be _____ for kids.
- Wise fathers focus on the hearts of their kids.
 - Parents are typically tempted to focus only on _____ behavior.
 - The Bible emphasizes the heart as the key to change and to full, abundant living.

“Keep your heart with all vigilance for from it flow the springs of life.”
– Proverbs 4:23 (ESV)

“The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”
– Luke 6:45 (ESV)

“Behavior is not the basic issue. The basic issue is always what is going on in the heart ... The heart is the wellspring of life. Therefore, parenting is concerned with shepherding the heart.” – Tedd Tripp, Pastor
 - A thread that is going to run through this last section is the importance of connecting with your kids _____ .

FOR PERSONALITY RESOURCE VISIT: YOURUNIQUEDESIGN.COM

5. Wise fathers are grace-dependent.

- Wise fathers have recognized their own _____ and their own need for forgiveness before a holy God.

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”
– Romans 3:23-24 (ESV)

- Jesus tells us there is a link between expressing _____ and showing love.

“... He who is forgiven little, loves little.” – Luke 7:47 (ESV)

- Wise fathers also recognize their daily need for _____ as a parent. They’ve realized they can’t do it alone.

DISCUSSION / REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What would it look like in your fatherhood to apply our definition of Authentic Manhood?
2. Discuss the temptation to focus only on your kids’ external behavior as opposed to focusing on the heart.
3. Discuss the importance of recognizing your own daily need for grace as a dad in light of offering that same grace to your kids.

ANSWERS

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Fatherhood can make a man's life rich, filled with joy and laughter and give a man a lasting sense of gratification and achievement.
2. However, the reality is that being a father and cultivating a family isn't **easy**.
3. We need men who are willing to embrace the long road of building and **cultivating** a family.

II. FIVE FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS OF FATHERHOOD

1. The family was **God's** idea.
 - o The family was God's idea and was part of his purpose for mankind and for how we should relate to one another in this world.
"Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" – Genesis 2:24 (ESV)
 - o God calls children a **gift** .
"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate." – Psalm 127:3-5 (ESV)
 - o **Fatherhood** is not just some added to-do on your list of responsibilities.
2. Fatherhood is a God-given **commission**.
 - o God has commissioned and entrusted fathers with the noble task of nurturing, guiding, and equipping their children for life.
 - o This commission is taught directly or implied throughout the Bible. For example: Proverbs 22:6; 29:17; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 3:4.
 - o "Parents ought to consider themselves entrusted with the (temporary) responsibility and stewardship of nurturing and cultivating a child's heart and mind in light of the Scriptures and on behalf of God...[and] while children ought to obey both parents, fathers bear special responsibility for disciplining their children."
– Andreas K. Kostenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family*

3. Fatherhood takes **intentionality**.

- Authentic Manhood definition, which we discovered from the life of Jesus:
 - Reject Passivity
 - Accept Responsibility
 - Lead Courageously
 - Invest Eternally

4. Wise fathers focus on the **heart**.

“Never fully knowing ourselves, never fully knowing others, and never fully finding the abundant life ... We spend our existence toiling to make life happen, and all it gets us is a grave, a marker, and a date.”
- Chip Dodd, *The Voice of the Heart*

- Heart-deficient fathers can be **toxic** for kids.
- Wise fathers focus on the hearts of their kids.
 - Parents are typically tempted to focus only on **external** behavior.
 - The Bible emphasizes the heart as the key to change and to full, abundant living.

“Keep your heart with all vigilance for from it flow the springs of life.”
– Proverbs 4:23 (ESV)

“The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”
– Luke 6:45 (ESV)

“Behavior is not the basic issue. The basic issue is always what is going on in the heart ... The heart is the wellspring of life. Therefore, parenting is concerned with shepherding the heart.” – Tedd Tripp, Pastor
 - A thread that is going to run through this last section is the importance of connecting with your kids **heart**.

FOR PERSONALITY RESOURCE VISIT: YOURUNIQUEDESIGN.COM

5. Wise fathers are grace-dependent.

- Wise fathers have recognized their own **brokenness** and their own need for forgiveness before a holy God.

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”
– Romans 3:23-24 (ESV)

- Jesus tells us there is a link between expressing **forgiveness** and showing love.

“... He who is forgiven little, loves little.” – Luke 7:47 (ESV)

- Wise fathers also recognize their daily need for **grace** as a parent. They’ve realized they can’t do it alone.