

Honoring Our Fathers

Luke 15:11-24

Preface

Illus: Over 30 years ago before I became a father, and even before I became a husband, I read a book by Joyce Landorf titled, “Tough & Tender.” The book encourages Christian men to be decisive and exhibit strength of character while showing sensitivity and gentleness as well.

Men struggle with this balancing act every day. Men must be strong and committed to doing what is right and necessary. At the same time, men must show compassion and love.

Getting the right balance is seldom easy.

Of all the rich parables told by our Lord, none displays this like the one we are about to read.

Scripture

¹¹ Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

¹³ “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’ ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ *“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’”*

²² *“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.*

²³ *Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate. Luke 15:11-24 NIV*

Introduction

We all know this story as the parable of the “Prodigal Son”. There is much to learn from the behavior both sons. But there is far more for us to learn from the actions of the father.

The father in this parable is an amazing father. We have a lot of amazing fathers right here in this room today.

Fathers get a bad rap these days; put down by TV, clueless, etc.

Illus: One father was asked, who was in charge in his home. He answered, “Well, my wife bosses the children. My children boss the dog & cat, & I can say anything I want to the geraniums.

Unfortunately, I think there is a lot of truth to that statement in many American homes. Today is my desire to give credit where credit is due.

Fathers are important to the family. Just as every father should teach his children to love their mother; every mother should teach her children to love and respect their father.

Repeat that statement – Even if the father is not living in the family because of divorce. Your children deserve a father they can respect!

1. Fathers work hard to provide

A. Work hard to keep things up; lifting and fixing things.

Illus: I think of some men in our church who work construction, in hot sun lifting and sweating. But they aren't the only ones.

Men are expected to use their backs and do the lifting, etc.

Illus: I tell people, "Whatever you get when you cross a banker and a pack mule, that is what I am." Pay for it and carry it!

B. Work to provide money for the expenses of the household.

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

Illus: Boy writes home to father, "Write more often even if it is just 5s and 10s."

Dreaded words, "We need money in our account."

Great burden of knowing you must provide. It is hard on a man when he can't give his family what they need and want.

Illus: Snow skiing and realizing the consequences of getting hurt.

C. Work hard to provide guidance and training

Fathers work to teach their children right from wrong.

But they also teach how to do things, play sports, outdoor activities, how to fix things; how to be responsible, etc.

Illus: Me making Morgan pay for insurance but giving her money for the mission trip.

2. Fathers suffer with their children

Men don't often show their emotions but they have emotions.

We are human beings just like women and we feel the emotions and pain, we struggle with things just the same.

Children can be hard on their fathers.

It is painful on a father to see a child make mistakes.

It is painful on a father to have a mother undermine them or allow a child to do something behind their back.

In our parable, it must have killed this father to watch his son behave in this manner.

It is hard on a father to see their children suffer; especially when it could have been avoided.

3. Fathers never stop loving their children

People often say there is nothing like a mother's love. A mother's love is no stronger than a father's love. It is just displayed differently.

Father's love their children deeply and that father's love never stops.

Notice in the parable, the father was watching and waiting for the prodigal son to come home.

No doubt every single day was torture for this father. He worried about his son. He worried if he was still alive and if he was safe.

Don't miss two things. He was watching and waiting! But, the chores and responsibilities went on!

A father must bear the burden of pushing forward and providing even when everything in him wants to shut down.

In Jesus' parable, the father says my son was lost but now is found. My son was dead but now is alive. This gives us insight into the depth of the pain this father was feeling.

In spite of the heartache children place upon their parents, fathers keep on loving them. And fathers are constantly watching the road for their children to come home.

4. Fathers rejoice with their children

Regardless of all the pain and suffering this young man caused his father, notice the rejoicing when the boy came to his senses.

Fathers rejoice in their children's accomplishments.

Yes, we push our children to work harder than we did. We push them to get an education. We push them to practice more, study more, think more and plan more.

We want our children to do everything better than we did.

But we rejoice with them in their successes. Fathers tell their children they are proud of them and celebrate their accomplishments more than we celebrate our own.

This father called for a celebration, a feast because his son had swallowed his pride and came home. The father knew this was a milestone and accomplishment of maturity, all be it the hard way.

Illus: Fathers get awfully worked up about sports and push their children hard. But that is because a father rejoices more in their children's accomplishments than he does his own.

Conclusion

1. Fathers know you are not alone in your struggles.
2. Wives appreciate your husbands and let them know.
3. Children respect and honor your father for what he does.

Video: Rich Man

Testimonies: Thank you Dad.

4. Fathers to strive to be more like the father of this parable.

Illus: little boy who was playing on Sunday morning while Dad was in a lounge chair reading the paper. And the father said: "Son, get yourself ready for Sunday School". The little boy asked: "Are you coming with me today Dad?" The man replied: "No, I'm not coming. But I want you to hurry up and get ready". The little boy then said: "Did you used to go to Sunday School when you were a boy, Dad?" He said: "I most certainly did!" As the boy walked away the boy mumbled: "Yeah, and I bet it won't do me any good either!"

Are you the father God wants you to be?