

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

June 17, 2018

SPEAKER

Brian Frost

SERIES

Building Blocks Of The Family

PART

6

TITLE

A Father's Long Shadow

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 2:16-17; 24; 3:6-12; Ephesians 6:4



© 2018 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.

Well it is great to see you, Providence family. I hope you've had a great week and if you are new here with us, we are so glad that you are our guest. I hope that this time is really encouraging to you. To all the fathers in the room, I hope you have a great day. For all the kids in the room, I hope that even if it requires tremendous grace and patience, that you love on your dad today. It's an important day. It's an important day in a world that's full of brokenness, and it's a really important day for him, even if he is not the best dad.

The fact is, is this message is sort of interesting, how every single year when we get to Mother's Day it's always this celebration of womanhood and then we get to Father's Day, it always feels a little bit heavier. Always feels like, guys, if you just live up to your end of the deal, things around here would be a whole lot better, and the fact is, is there's just so many amazing dads in this world and there's so many amazing dads in this room, and even if you're not one of them, the fact is, is that God still has you alive. Today is the first day of the rest of your life and there are things that God has told us within his word that if we will yield to him, [inaudible 00:02:00] yield to God to his word, to what he says to us and we yield to each other, is that God has the power to literally change the world. He can change your family. He can change your life.

So, I pray to the Lord, I have this week, that God would help you to see this through the lens of not just what you haven't lived up to but maybe what's possible, because God has amazing things set in motion for you. So, we're in a series. This is the sixth week of the series, as we're just looking at the family from the first three chapters of the Bible, so if you brought one, if you head all the way back to the very beginning, the second chapter of Genesis. If you can multitask, we're also gonna look at the sixth chapter of Ephesians, and that's in verse four, but we'll be there in a while, okay?

What I want to do first, though, is just pray for us. Okay? So, if you would, let's bow. Let's pray together. Father in heaven, thank you for every person in this room, and we thank you for the investment that our father, even in imperfect, that investment that he's made in our life. We thank you for the father figures in our life. We thank you for the people who have instructed and protected and provided and have sought to train us. We thank you, God, for the gift that even though every single father on this earth is flawed, that we can look to you, our heavenly father, because of Jesus Christ, and not only be forgiven of our sin but be adopted into your family, and that we can have the perfect ... not just the model, but, God, we can have a perfect father who instructs us and protects us and provides for us and who seeks to train us up in the way we should go.

So, we are so grateful for your grace in our life. I pray that you would help each heart to listen today through the lens of hope. We confess to you that there is so much loss. We confess to you there is regret. There's failure. There's passivity. There's irresponsibility. There's abandonment. There's so many things in this broken world that this day, in many ways, reminds us of, but God, I pray that you would help us to see your word and to see what's possible and to have hope within our heart because of the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. So, we look to you. Would you speak through weakness and do good to every person here? We pray in Christ's name, amen. Amen.

Well, all the men in the room, I just want you to know, God has made you with intent. You are important to him. No matter what you've done in this world, I want you to know, you're more than whatever it is that you've done. You're more than all of your accomplishments, all of your failures, all of your mistakes, all of your job titles. You are more than the number of abs you can count when you look into a mirror, all right? You are more than your coolest toy, than all of your possessions, your net worth, your stuff, your title, your education, your reputation, your marital status. You're more than all these things, because the Bible says that you were created in the image of God with the supreme calling. There's other things that he has us do but all of those things, they fit into the supreme calling, and this is why you're here. This is why you are important to God. It's because you have the capacity to know God and to glorify God with your life and to do his will.

What we find within the scriptures is clues that he lays almost like breadcrumbs, to help us identify what his will is for our life, and one of those clues that he places within our life is the abilities and capacities and interest and gifts that he's given to each and every single one of us. One of the most amazing things is this, is that even though, fathers, you are more than your capacity to have and need a family, God has given you this capacity. If we don't use it, the family will falter. You see, fathers, your influence is absolutely staggering. Every social scientist says as much.

You see, a father's shadow stretches so far and so wide that families tend to walk in that shade their entire life. Sometimes in our own culture today, you hear the word "shade." That he threw shade at me, and what we mean by that is that he's insulting me, but don't forget that there's another way that shade is a great benefit to every one of us, and that is when it's really hot outside and there's a canopy and you come underneath that shade, it can be a tremendous blessing, and the fact is, is it's true of fathers as well. The shadow of a father can cause tremendous comfort and tremendous pain. That influence is there, which is why every social scientist raves of the benefits of an active dad within the home, and mourns over his absence.

So today what we want to do is explore fatherhood, which is just a facet of manhood, and it's one of God's greatest gifts in the world. If I'm just being totally honest with you, if there is one kind of sermon that always makes me the most uncomfortable when I'm preparing that sermon, it's on fatherhood. See, if I were to sort of stockpile my greatest life regrets, the great majority of my top 10 would be in my relationships with my three sons. It's the facial expressions that I've given out of haste, it's the words that I've spoken out of haste, it's the things that I withheld from them out of haste. It's those kinds of regrets and those relationships where I love them so much that I look back upon and that's truly the deepest wounds that I can find within my own heart.

So, I don't come with a rod today, I come with humility, but I also come with hope because no matter what you've done as a father or what you haven't done as a father, I want you to know that there are things that you can do by the power of God's spirit that makes a difference the rest of your life and the rest of their life. The very first instance that we find within the scriptures of fatherhood is Genesis chapter 2 and verse 24.

It's an interesting thing. The very first time we see the word "father," it's a person that we're supposed to leave. Genesis 2:24. God takes the man and the woman, Adam and Eve. He marries them, he joins them together and this is what he says to them. "A man shall leave his father." That's the first mention we get.

Now, this is really important. In fact, when we get to the end, fathers, I'm going to remind you that one of your primary goals is to prepare your children to leave. That should be a goal of yours and the children within your home. With very few exceptions, it should be the goal of theirs. I'm preparing myself to leave my father. Now, that's really important because there's no fathers at this point in time. There's no children. What that means is this is all prescriptive for us. He's setting categories in the first three chapters for the rest of humanity so we can look back and say, "This is God's plan. These are the basic building blocks of the family, that if we'll put them into motion, we'll stack these blocks on top of each other. What'll take place is it'll provide health for our family but it'll also perpetuate other healthy families."

One of those critical ingredients is leaving. It's a really hard thing when you think about it. When you love someone so much, the last thing you want is for them to leave, and yet that is precisely the goal, is that they would then be the father or the mother of their family, and so it would continue to the glory of God, but we're supposed to ask if indeed this is a man we're supposed to leave, what benefits are we leaving when we leave our father in order to be married to somebody else?

We're supposed to ask what is he supposed to provide, and in asking what was my dad supposed to provide if myself and my fiancée were about to get married and we're both leaving our father and if I'm the man, I'm the father of the new family, what are the benefits I'm supposed to supply that now we're not receiving any longer because we're not under the loving and caring hand of father? This is the very first mention, and so what we find here is there's within the first three chapters of the Bible, there are four very specific benefits, gifts that God has given through fatherhood and I want to tell you what they are.

The first is this, is that fatherhood is a gift. God's gift of instruction. It's God's gift of instruction. Look what it says in chapter 2, verse 15. It says, "Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it, keep it, and the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die.' Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper fit for him.'"

So, this is God's plan. He creates this amazing, beautiful garden. There's perfect peace, perfect beauty in everything, and then he creates a man in his image with a capacity to know him, to glorify him and to do his will, and he says to him, "This is what I want you to do. I want you to work this garden. I want you to keep it. I want you to bring out of the soil what it's capable of producing. You're gonna work hard. You're gonna be a faithful steward and manager over it," and then he gives him an instruction. It begins with generosity.

He says, "You see everything? You see all these trees? Everything. You may surely eat of all of it, except for just one. There's just one over here. You see this one over here? I'm not gonna put a wall on it, around it. I'm not gonna station an army around it. I'm gonna tell you not to eat it. You're the protector of this thing. Don't eat it."

Now, who's not here at this point in time? Eve is not here at this point in time. Have you ever thought about that? God could've waited like two hours, right? Made Eve. "All right, here they are. Okay, instructions. You may eat of everything, but this one right over here, don't eat of this one." Instead, what he does is he goes, "Now, look. This is what we're gonna do. Don't eat of this. It's not good that you're alone. I'm gonna make somebody here for you and your job is to tell her. You are the instructor. It's your privilege to be able to tell other people in your circle of influence what I, God, says is right and wrong, truth and error, righteousness, sin. What is good, what is right, what is excellent, what is noble. Who I am, who you are and how to live in my world. It's your job to tell her."

It's interesting, as you keep reading through the Old Testament, what you find is that God literally placed the man and gave him the role to serve as a priest over his family. Isn't it interesting today that when we celebrate holidays, often times the holidays are led, organized, planned, prepared by mom, but when you read the Bible, every feast, every festival, every Passover Seder, it was all dad. It was dad who was cutting out the crafts to get ready for the children so that he could teach them about God. It was dad that was on passover saying, "Now, everyone gather around. I want to read from God's word. I want to tell you what he's done."

It was the dad's role to pray for his family. It was the dad's role to teach the scriptures what they had to their families. We see this in passages like Psalm 78 verse 6. It says, "And he appointed a law in Israel which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them." You see, this is the picture right here. This is the picture that God has for dads. Sitting down, looking kids in the eye, being a father figure, explaining truth and righteousness and what is good and what is fitting. Who they are and who God is.

The very first responsibility was instruction. Now, understand what I'm saying here. This doesn't limit the instruction only to fathers. Last week when we looked at motherhood, we saw that the third thing, the third gift that God gives through motherhood is instruction as well, so clearly it's a dual responsibility, but it is a dual responsibility. Nor does this imply that our child can't know God without the faithful instruction of a father because there's tons of examples through scripture where a child grows up without a godly, without even a god fearing, without even a god believing dad and teaches nothing, and yet this child, male and female, they grow up to love God and to know God.

Nor is this saying, right, that you must have kids in order to be a father figure to somebody else, to be fatherly, to instruct someone else. When I think about the people, even in this very room, over the years who have invested in my boys, I think of men like Dan. I think of men like David and Paul, Leon, Dave and John, Brian. I can see faces, all these people. They're not my kids' dad and yet they've been faithful to tell them things that are true about God, things that are true about themselves. This is such a gift that we have. Even the Apostle Paul, he felt like he was a father figure to everybody.

First Thessalonians, he's writing to a church. Chapter 2, verse 11 and 12 says, "Like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God." You see what he's saying? "I'm not your dad. I know I'm not your dad, but I can still instruct you like a dad." It's a gift. It's a privilege, and listen, if you've never done it before, you can start right now. Your kids may be older and even out of the house. Send them a text. It may surprise them if you've never done anything like this. Send them a text this week with just one verse in the Bible. You don't even have to say anything about it.

Let me just share something that's true with you. If your kids [inaudible 00:16:55] this is an opportunity, even tonight to say, "Let me just read. Let me just read some of what he talked about this morning. I don't even know what it means but let me just read it to you." Fathers, if you've never done it, today is the first day of the rest of your life. The people in your circle of influence, they don't have to get it from you, but they can get it from you. It's a gift. It's a gift that God wants to give them through you, and it's a gift that if you allow yourself to be used in this way, you will be blessed indeed. You will know that you're blessed. There's nothing like it.

The second thing is this, is that fatherhood is God's gift of protection, of protection. You see this in chapter 3. In chapter 3 it says that the serpent, Satan, he comes into the garden and he says to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'ye shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" Do you see what he does? He always minimizes the generosity of God. The woman says to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden. Neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

The serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die, for God knows when you eat of it, your eyes will be open, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil," so when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and there was a delight to the eyes and the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. He was there. Satan comes and speaks to them. He tempts them to the point that they believe that sinning against God was a trade up instead of a trade down. She takes the fruit, she eats it and says that she passes it to the man who is observing, watching, is right there.

It's stunning when you think about the generosity of God, isn't it? Have you ever thought that God could've made it that you were the food? He may have had a thing for lions and tigers and say, "You know what, we really need a food source for these things. I'll tell you what, let's create people. Let's create people that the animals can just chew on." No, that's not how it went. He could've done that. He's God. He was creating everything from his spoken word. Instead he said, "You know what? I made you in my image and I'm blessing you with all of this. There's one thing I don't want you to touch. It's this right here."

Adam was there. Just a few weeks ago we had a bunch of family over at our house for a celebration. Our son's graduation. There's several young nieces and lots of people around. We're out in the front and there's a snake that comes in and he's near the house, so my son sees the snake and without necessarily thinking a whole lot, he reaches down and he grabs the tail of the snake and throws it, and I'm looking at him. I walk up and I said, "What was that about?" He said, "Well, I had to do something."

Those are pleasant words to a dad. He could've said, "I just wasn't going to do anything. There's some little girls, but I had to do something." I said, "You realized that you grab the tail of a snake, it doesn't like it a whole lot. We could've shot it instead." For all the animal lovers, I'm sorry. We could've stunned it and caressed it and relocated it, or we could've shot it, you know? I said, "Why did you grab it by the tail?" He said, "I had to do something." Adam should've done something. He could've yelled. He could've got a battle ax. I don't care what he did. He could've done something, and he watched.

This is the very first seed that's been planted in the heart of every single man in the world and that's the seed of passivity. We just let someone else do it. Let someone else pray for it. Let someone else fight for injustice. Let someone else, let someone else. Someone else will do it. He did nothing. Now let me ask you, who is the first person to eat of the apple? It's Eve, right? Who is the first person who is held accountable for eating the apple? It was Adam.

You ask the question, "Why was that? How come God didn't come down, he says, 'Now look, I saw what you did so let me address you first.'" No, actually, what it says is, is that God came down in the cool and he says, "Man, where are you? I want to have a conversation with you. Why is that?" Well, the New Testament says this. It says in 1 Timothy 2:14, it says, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived." Eve was tricked but Adam failed to lead. He failed to protect, and God says this to him in chapter 3, verse 17. He says, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, you were supposed to be protecting, you were supposed to be leading, you were supposed to do something. Instead, you just followed. You were quiet. You did nothing. You did nothing."

Stunningly, God comes in. He goes, “And now you’re gonna blame me and you’re gonna blame her?” You see, when the New Testament describes the presence of sin to humanity, who receives all the blame? It’s Adam. Romans chapter 5, verse 12, it says, “Sin came into the world through one man.” What does this mean? It means when God looks down and you’re home and he finds sin, injustice or impurity that is unchecked, and he knocks on the door, he’s not intending first to talk to her. He’s intending to talk to you. He’s gonna hold us accountable. He’s gonna hold us accountable to protect our family from all that is there.

Notice I said “unchecked.” You can read a story of a man named Eli who saw his kids at risk, who saw their sin and it says, “But he didn’t want to say anything to them because he didn’t want to upset the apple cart.” God comes and he goes, “This is your fault, Eli. They’re doing the sinning but you’re responsible here,” and so he calls us to be a wall. You see, fathers are to be like a giant wall that protects their family, and do you know why TV dads are always passive and aloof and irresponsible is because Satan wants to tear down the wall.

1 Corinthians 16:13, God says to us, “Be watchful. Stand firm in the faith. Act like men and be strong. Be strong.” See, God has made you strong to protect. He’s given you clarity so that you can protect. If you say, “I don’t have a healthy role model,” you’ve got a whole Bible full of role models. You know what? He’s even forgiven us of sin so that we don’t feel paralyzed about confronting our children about their sin. He’s given us everything that we need. He’s given us all this so that we can provide the shade to our children, not only of instruction but of protection.

The third thing that we see about fatherhood is in chapter 3 and it’s that fatherhood is God’s gift of provision. He wants to provide for the world. You see, for failure to lead, what we find is that Adam was giving the call to sweat. Look what he says in chapter 3, verse 17, 18 and 19. He talks to Eve, he talks to the serpent and now he gets to man and he says, “And to Adam,” he said, “because you have listened to the voice of your wife and of Eden of the tree of which I commanded you, you shall not eat of it. Cursed is the ground because of you and pain, you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles, it shall bring forth for you and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread.”

I’m gonna be quick here. Men, you do not have to make all the money. You don’t have to make a lot of money, and you don’t even have to make the majority of money. Your wife may have an amazing job that makes more money and you can thank God for that, but what is given to us is the responsibility to feel the impulse of provision. It gets you out of bed first, that if you have one month of money left and no idea how to get a second, God has called us to get out of bed first and figure it out. To sweat. To work hard. To humble ourself. To move dirt if necessary in order to make sure that the people in our life enjoy the shade of provision, of food, of comfort, of clothing.

So, he's given us strong hands and strong arms and strong shoulders for that very purpose. Not to use that strength for our good but to use that strength to even provide for our children or maybe even someone else's children. The third thing that we find ... I'm sorry, the fourth thing that we find here in Genesis 1 through 3 is fatherhood is God's gift of discipline. Of discipline. You see, a father was supposed to reflect God to the family, that when the children looked at the father, that was the closest thing to strength, to a fatherly figure, to the heavenly father. We don't find Adam doing any discipline whatsoever in the first three chapters of the Bible, but we do find God, providing a model of discipline for each and every one of us, and what we find is there's always four ingredients to healthy discipline. You take any one of the four out and it becomes unhealthy.

What are these four? Well, the first is genuine relationship. It says that God would walk with them in the cool of the day. He was with them. You see, you add a bunch of rules and you remove a relationship and the only thing you yield is rebellion. We have to be with our children. We have to talk to them. We have to know them. We have to study them. We have to know how they're built. We have to know how they thrive. We have to be with them. There needs to be a relationship for discipline to be healthy. The second thing is we need clear instructions and consequence. It was very, very clear. You may eat of everything but this one and in the day that you eat of this one, you're gonna die.

It's pretty clear. So our children, they need a clear understanding of what is right and wrong in our home and they need a clear understanding of what will take place if they go about doing that. The third thing that is required for healthy discipline you find here is consistent accountability. God didn't come down that day and say, "Okay, one, one and a half, two, on three, on three, it's coming." No, what we're teaching there is you can rebel for three seconds, and there's no other account. It's not like we have Genesis 2 and a half in between these, right? To where they sinned and God says, "I'll tell you what. Grace, just this one time, but if you do it again, if you do it again, then it's over. Then you're gonna have to leave. One more time."

No, here's the instruction. Here's the consequence and here's the ... Now it's delivered. You sinned. This is what you chose to ... You knew what would take place. I'm only wanting to be honest to my word. We stood up in agreement. You do this, this happens. You did it. If I don't, then I'm not fulfilling my end of the deal, so you basically asked for this to take place by choosing to do this. Clear, consistent accountability.

The fourth is abundant grace. Did you notice that in the end, that God said, "All right, there's still a relationship. I'm not your consequence. My anger is not your consequence. I still want to be with you. I'm gonna make a promise in chapter 3, verse 15. It's gonna send my son to rescue you so you can be with me forever, but there's still a consequence, but I'm gonna give you grace." What we find is the New Testament reinforces this very pattern. In Ephesians chapter 6, verse 4, that's exactly what he says. He says, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." We have a responsibility to provide discipline to our children.

Dad, I want you to know that even if you walk around with a t-shirt that says, “World’s greatest dad” that your kids brought from the local Cracker Barrel, you’re gonna occasionally make them angry. You’re gonna say, “It’s time to go to bed” and they’re gonna get angry. You’re gonna wake them up earlier than they want to get up and it’s gonna make them angry. That’s not what he’s talking about here. What he’s saying here is there’s a possibility to parent in such a way that creates an abiding, settled anger within them. A disposition towards resentment that you definitely do not want.”

So we all say, “Yeah, I don’t want to do that. How do I not do that?” He tells you. He says, “But, or instead, bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” What are these two things? What is discipline? What this word is, is it says, “I’m for you, which is why I’m pushing or restricting you until you push and restrict yourself. Until you get up at an appropriate time, I’m gonna have to get you up at an appropriate time.”

Instruction says, “I’m for you, which is why I’m gonna take the time to care for you and listen to you and explain and reason and ask questions and answer your questions,” and there’s gonna be a relationship and not just rules, and so to avoid settled anger, there has to be a balance of two things. One is pace and one is provision. Pace. It says, “Bring them up.” Bring them up. Up is a direction. Could be bring them out. What that means is out of the house. Bring them up means bring them out. Your goal as a dad and mom is to prepare your children to live when you are not there. To live for the glory of God whether you’re on the earth in a different home or you’re in heaven and they’re still on the earth, that’s your goal.

It cannot be your goal to keep them so close because you need them that you prepare a basement for them. Up, but “bring” is a word of progress. Bring says, “You’re not there yet, so I’m gonna bring you to this place.” There has to be a really, really clear understanding about what “bring” means, and this is why. If we force kids into adulthood when they’re not ready, meaning they’re really, really little but we force them to be adults, it causes fear and that causes unsettled anger. Or the other side, we can cause people who really should have independence, but we keep them squashed down and we keep them in the basement and we keep them in the closet and we keep them in the room. We say, “You can’t go out because I need you so bad around me.” Well, that creates settled anger.

So there has to be a balance of pace, how fast we’re moving with them, but then the second thing is provision. There has to be a balance of instruction and discipline. You see, if we over-discipline a child, which means there’s no love, there’s no relationship. It’s just rules, then they assume that they’re a burden, and like this picture, a father is like a mirror to a child. Children are always trying to figure out if they’re a blessing or a burden, and they look into their father’s eyes for the answer, which is why it’s so stunning.

It's really helpful for you to not only confess your sin to them with what you say but also how you look. To communicate to them that right now, at this moment, you are an inconvenience is a sin against God. So we want to be careful that we don't over-discipline, right? But also if we over-reason, means no discipline whatsoever, then our kids assume that they have to understand anything before they obey. Hebrews chapter 12, verse 11 says, "For the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant," but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it," and so this training is part of the pleasant shade that God gives through our fathers, and so, fathers, there's four different things. Instruction, discipline, protection and provision, and the fact is, is that every single one of us has been inconsistent in all four of these areas.

Every single one of us has been imperfect, and yet every single one of us has been given this trust from God himself to say, "I'm giving this to you so that you can provide healthy shade to the people in your life." So, two applications. First is this, is, "Let's be the fathers that God's grace allows us to be." You can do this. You have it in you. The spirit of God can do this in your life. Every single one of us, as fathers, we want hope to know that our mistakes are not gonna crush our children. Every father wants clarity of when to give discipline and when to give grace and every father wants their kids to perform, which causes over-discipline and we also want our kids to like us, which causes under-discipline.

This is why we have to run to the gospel. The good news that Jesus Christ came to this earth to die for our sin, and he rose from the dead to accomplish what we could not accomplish, that we could enter into a relationship with God and when we trust Jesus and lean our life against Jesus Christ to say that you're the savior of my life, he forgives us of our sin but he also gives us his spirit. He adopts us into his family and his spirit allows us to do new things. His spirit literally gives us hope. The spirit picks us off the floor. Says that you've never instructed you could do so today. If you've never protected, you can do so today.

The gospel also reminds us that sin and grace are both important to God. So important that he would kill his son for one and he would extend to the world that other. The gospel also reminds us who to worship. You see, when we make an idol out of ourself, we tend to over-discipline, don't we? If I really want you to think a whole lot about me and I consider that my kids are a reflection of me, then I can over-discipline them so that you think something about me. In this case, what we're really doing is just worshiping me. The gospel goes, "Bro, you're not the point. Don't forget that. You're not God to worship," but isn't it interesting, we can also make our children into a God where we need them. We need them close. We need them to like me.

If they don't like me, it just crushes me, so we turn them into an idol and what does this produce? Under-discipline. I can't do anything that would cause you to want to leave me whatsoever, because I need you near me. So what the gospel does is it reminds us of all of these things and it gives us the grace to say, "Hey, for today, first day of the rest of your life." What influence can you have in the lives of people in your life to be father figures to them?

The last application is let's set our eyes on our heavenly father. See, the only person who has the gall to wake up a king in the middle of the night to ask for a glass of what is his kids. In Jesus Christ, we've been adopted into his family. We have that kind of access with God the father. When we trusted Jesus, he adopted us into his family and so we have a perfect father who instructs and protects and provides and disciplines for our good, so even when our models on the earth are not perfect, we can always look to him. You can always look to our good father.

Let's pray together, all right? Father in heaven, we thank you for today and I pray for the fathers in the room. Pray, God, that you'd give them hope, that you would help them to see just some of the practical, tangible things that you desire to do through them. I pray that you would heal broken hearts as they think back about father figures that maybe weren't as healthy, but God, we look to you now. We consider you the only true model to follow. The perfect model to follow.

God, we look to you and we want to respond to you out of faith, and so I pray for those in the room who've never trusted you as their savior, that you would incline their heart right now to call out to you in faith, and I pray for those of us who know you as savior and Lord, that you would help us now to respond not only in our giving but in our singing, in our loving, in our talking with one another, our encouragement of one another, in a way of responding to what you have said to us, so God, would you strengthen the fathers' hands in the room? I pray in Jesus name, amen.



© 2018 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)
Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.
Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.