

Remnant Life Church  
June 17, 2018  
**Living Like a Godly Dad**  
I Corinthians 4:14-21

- It is a tremendous privilege to be a parent, but it is also very demanding with great responsibilities
  - It is easy to become a biological father, but it is much harder to be a good dad
  - It is easy to listen sympathetically to someone talk about their problems, but it is something else to become an invested friend
  - It is easy to pray with someone occasionally, but it requires much more to become a living, breathing, testifying example of Jesus Christ with your very life for someone to observe and learn from.
- Having children does not make you a parent, just as having a set of golf clubs does not make you a golfer.
  - It must be worked at with purpose, intent, and a commitment to learn and grow in that role
  - To do anything with purpose means that you intentionally give of yourself
  - But that will look different for each person, whether you are a physical, emotional, or spiritual parent

**READ – I Cor 4:14-21**

- Paul is writing to the church in Corinth as a father
  - They are in need of guidance
    - At the time of this writing Corinth is one of the most important and largest cities of the Greek world
      - It is already over 700 years old
      - There were 90,000 people living there 400 years before Paul's arrival
    - An important location with 2 ports meaning great activity, wealth, culture, agriculture, and every temptation of the flesh imaginable
    - There is also a great deal of idol worship
      - Great temples to Apollo and Octavia
      - A larger than life bronze stature of Poseidon at the center of the great marketplace
      - *I Cor 8:5-6 –For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.*
  - Paul is not called their father just because he says he is but because of his relationship to them
    - Being a father, a mother, a friend is about relationship

- Just as God is our heavenly Father through our relationship with Him in Jesus Christ
- In his role as spiritual father Paul presents, not only an important caution, but the characteristics of a godly parent
- First, the caution
  - *I Cor 4:14-15 - I am writing this not to shame you but to warn you as my dear children. Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.*
    - Why does Paul reference shame?
      - At least 2 other letters that Paul wrote
        - One lost, the other painful
        - Paul did not want to crush their young spirits
    - Paul is referring to them as spiritual children
    - Guardians as opposed to fathers
      - He is differentiating between fathering and only guarding children
      - The Greek word for guardian is pih-DAH-go-gahz – also translates into instructor and tutor
      - In the Greek and Roman upper-class household this was a trusted slave tasked with raising the boys of the family
      - They would teach, care for, guard and protect the morals of the children
      - The boys could not leave the house without them
    - But a guardian is not a father and Paul is making sure they understand this
      - A guardian is replaceable but not a father
    - Paul’s use of the number 10,000 is what in writing is called hyperbole
      - It is an over-stated exaggeration designed to emphasize a point
        - “If I’ve told you once, I’ve told you a million times!”
        - “I’m so hungry I could eat a horse”
      - The use of the number 10K in Greek culture was regularly heard as the highest number imaginable
        - i.e. - Number of stars in the sky
      - So, Paul is saying, even though you have an inexhaustible number of people telling how to live, you have very few that are “fathers”
      - Paul wants them to know that he is one of those who are most valuable
        - He led them to the Lord
        - He has invested in them
        - He loves and cares deeply for them
- What should that type of man or woman who is more than a guardian look like?
- 1. It is someone to be imitated
  - a. (vv 16-17) to imitate is to mimic
    - i. Mimicking someone else only happens as you watch them so that you can then copy what they do
      - 1. Are you living a life that is watchable?

2. One of the great lines of excuse, “Do as I say, not as I do”
    - ii. Test yourself when it comes to how imitable you are with your children (or anyone else that is watching your life)
      1. In the car, someone cuts you off, you slam on your breaks, and do...what?
      2. Your going on a family vacation with the kids – are you honest with the school or do you make something up?
    - iii. A bad example is NEVER harmless
      1. What type of impact does your life have in the sphere of your influence?
      2. You may think little or none but that is not true
  - b. Let me assure you – you are being watched!
    - i. **Phil 3:17** – Paul says to follow his example, not to follow him
    - ii. If you are being imitated it means you are pointing people to Jesus
  - c. How sad it would be for us to become like the people of Israel when God on 3 separate occasions, “*Do not be like your parents (ancestors)*” – **2 Chron 30:7; Psalms 78:8; Zech 1:4**
2. Someone of fewer words and greater action
  - a. (**vv 18-20**) – talk is cheap!
  - b. To speak words that are not backed up with action can be very harmful to our children
    - i. If you say it is the last time, mean it
    - ii. If you say there will be consequences, then follow through
    - iii. If you say you’re sorry then change your behavior to demonstrate it
  - c. The Corinthians were apparently very good at words but weak in their actions
  - d. The same is true of our faith and our walk with the Lord
    - i. **Jas 2:20** - ...*faith without deeds is useless*
    - ii. Useless or dead – nay-kros – root word is the same as corpse
      1. Another meaning is to be inactive with respect to doing right
      2. Words of faith without living them is of no value
      3. The very definition of a dead Christian
  - e. One of the primary things that had infiltrated the Corinthian church was pride (arrogant or puffed up – **v 18**)
    - i. Pride is the great killer of all things in the Christian’s life (nearly 20 times in Proverbs alone)
      1. Relationships, health, wisdom, faith, intellect, etc...
    - ii. To speak arrogantly is to draw attention to yourself and away from God
3. Make the right choices (**v 21**)
  - a. Paul concludes this portion of his letter with a question but no answer
    - i. Why? – because it was up to the people of the church to choose
  - b. Paul is saying – how I come is entirely up to you
    - i. In love and with a gentle spirit
    - ii. Or with a whip of discipline
  - c. That is the same choice our children make every day with what they choose to do



- i. And the same choice we make with our heavenly Father
      - ii. Our choices dictate our direction
    - d. David
      - i. We know of 8 wives and 21 children (20 boys and 1 girl) **I Chron 3:1-9; 2 Sam 5:13-16**
      - ii. His concubines and their children are not recorded
        - 1. Recognize his influence
          - a. David's grandson, Rehoboam, had 18 wives, 60 concubines, 28 sons and 60 daughters (**2 Chron 11:21**)
          - b. Solomon – 700 wives and 300 concubines (**I Kings 11:3**)
        - 2. But God had told them not to intermarry with the women of other nations because they would turn their hearts (**I Kings 11:2**)
        - 3. But they chose to ignore God's directive and each of them suffered for it
- Last week we talked about doing the right thing
  - Being a dad is more than contributing to the reproductive process
  - Being a mom is more than giving birth
  - Being a friend is more than just hanging out together
  - Being a Christian is more than just saying you are
- Every one of us, whether we are a biological parent or not, will have the opportunity to act as a father or a mother to people in our lives.
- And so live a life that is worth copying; is more action than words; and chooses to do the right things
- You also do that by demonstrating the love of Jesus and the character of one who does not live for himself, but pours himself into others, pointing them to Jesus, and giving God all the glory.