

Remnant Life Church  
June 16, 2024  
**The Portrait of a Godly Father**  
Father's Day  
I Thess 2:8-12

- For the longest time, the role and measure of a man has been defined and identified in our culture primarily by one thing – money
  - How much the man had was what determined his value and influence.
    - It also impacted how he was viewed by others
    - Our perceptions of a man became a vital component in how we regarded who and what they were
- And I think we can easily see those changing perceptions of a man depicted in the television programs of a particular time period
  - In the 50's, the man was portrayed as Danny Thomas, Ward Cleaver, and Jim Anderson
    - Steady, dependable, and sensitive; “Father Knows Best.”
    - He was unwavering and always right
  - In the 60's, it was Andy Griffith, James T. Kirk, and Ben Cartwright
    - Wise, unflappable, able to flow with the circumstances, but often with a folksy, even whimsical sense of humor
    - You felt safe with them in charge of the situation
  - But in the 70's, the image began to change
    - Archie Bunker, Fred Sanford, George Jefferson, Hawkeye Pierce, and Howard Cunningham were now the standard
    - They represented a much broader and more diverse portrayal
    - They were men of emotional extremes and not as reliable as they once were
    - They could also be much more cynical and caustic in their demeanor
  - In the 80's, it was JR Ewing, Jack Tripper, Cliff Huxtable, Sam Malone, and Harry Anderson
    - These were men with responsibilities who took care of their business
    - But they all now had a dark, even hidden side with great frailties and faults
  - The 90's represented yet another significant shift in our perception as we were now watching Tim Allen, Frazier Crane, Fox Mulder, Jerry Seinfeld, Homer Simpson, Ray Romano, Joey, Ross, and Chandler
    - Men were now being portrayed, by and large, as fools and bumblers
    - They were always creating ridiculous situations for themselves to have to then deal with
    - And now, homosexuality, infidelity, addiction, and abuse are featured regularly as men, and as a direct result, the family unit itself, is continually torn down
  - This is a far cry from who and what God created a man to be

- But as we well know it did not start out well
  - **Gen 3:6** - *When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*
  - Notice what it says, "...gave some to her husband who was with her..."
  - Adam stood by silently while Eve was tempted, watched as she gave in, apparently never attempting to intervene and then participated himself
    - WE blew it from the very beginning, guys!
    - And we have been dealing with the consequences ever since

The perception of a man physically has also drastically changed

- There was a time when you could look at a person even from a distance and, by their appearance only, tell what gender they were
  - That became harder beginning in the 60's when long hair on men became the norm
  - But it has gone far beyond that
    - The goal today is to literally obliterate the gender line
    - Fashions, jewelry, makeup, hair, jobs, and family roles are today completely interchangeable
    - And I tell you this morning, it is all to our detriment
      - For example, drag queens - men dressing in outlandish glam makeup - are not only embraced but celebrated
      - We invite them into our schools to read to our children in what I believe is an ongoing attempt to indoctrinate their young minds into accepting yet one more perversion of God's creation
- Now...it is right about this point that some of you will start to squirm a little while others are trying to determine if you want to get mad or not. Well, please, don't get nervous and don't get mad...
  - Because the truth of this matter remains - genders are NOT the same
  - Man and woman were created differently, and no amount of political correctness can change that
  - LISTEN – Different is NOT defined as better or worse
    - Different simply means not the same
  - But the culture of today is actively trying to destroy the gender line so that little boys are being encouraged to play with dolls and embrace their 'feminine side' while little girls are being told that to even consider a life as a wife and a mother, without pursuing and achieving a high-powered, high-paying career, is to degrade themselves in the worst way possible
  - We have even gone so far in this lunacy to say that little boys and girls can now decide if they want to be a different gender than what they were born as!
- But I am here this morning, men, on Father's Day 2024, to talk primarily about us
  - Whether you are a physical father or not, you, as a Christian man, have a responsibility to model the heart of a godly father wherever you go

**READ – I Thess 2:7-12**

5 traits of this portrait I would like to paint for you this morning

1. Express Genuine Love (2:8a)

- a. *We loved you so much*
- b. In the original Greek, Paul's words mean *to long for*
  - i. Love today, between many fathers and their children, is often not given to then be received, but it is often bought with money and things
    1. Now I am all for teaching your children how to handle money
      - a. Budget, save, tithe
      - b. So, they must have some money in order to do that
    2. But trying to make up for your lack of attention and affection by giving them whatever they want is not a helpful thing, if fact, it is harmful
    3. You are instead teaching them that the investment of the heart is not needed, only the money and things
  - ii. *To long for* means that you WANT to express love
- c. Many, if not most men, find expressing love outwardly very difficult
- d. For most, it is because their own fathers did not express love and affection to them
  - i. Their dad was the Archie Bunker type who would be seen pushing his son-in-law away when he tried to hug him
  - ii. It is actually a generational curse handed down from father to son
    1. Will you be the one who will break that curse?
    2. Will you be the one who will paint a different portrait?
- e. In the same way, it is why God issued the command through Paul, "*husbands love your wives*" (Eph 5:25)
  - i. Again, for most men, this is often not a natural behavior
  - ii. It does not come easily because the pattern of non-expression so deeply engrained must be changed
    1. This is not only about touch and physical love (although for many men this is the only definition of expressing love)
    2. It is about emotional attention that cares for the needs of the other person
- f. Men, the first best way you can teach your children to be loving is to model that love for their mother with open, genuine affection
  - i. You might say your kids are too old, but it is never too late!
  - ii. Because the second-best thing you can do is to be affectionate with your children
- g. And it matters more than you can possibly know

A few years ago, the cartoon strip *For Better or for Worse* showed a dad coming into the room where his teenage daughter was sitting on the couch watching television and eating popcorn. He decides to sit down next to her and help himself to the popcorn. As he is sitting there, a little thought balloon appears over his head. He's thinking, "I remember when she was so young. I would hold her in my arms and love on her, and it was so wonderful. Now look at her. She's all grown up and such a talented, lovely girl, too. I wonder what she would think if I held her like I used to and told her again

how much I love her?” He finally concludes that, if he were to do that, she would probably think he was treating her like a little girl.

And while he’s thinking that, a little thought balloon appears above his daughter and she is thinking, “I wonder why Dad never hugs me anymore and tells me how much he loves me?”

2. Live a More Transparent Life (2:8b)

- a. *...we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well*
- b. Notice the connection between the words “gospel” and “lives”
  - i. It is one thing to tell people, so they hear the gospel
  - ii. It is another thing to actually demonstrate it by the way you live
- c. It’s a very simple question, men...
  - i. Do your children know you are a godly man simply by watching the way you live?
  - ii. Now take that a step further – work? Friends? The gym? In the store?
- d. This is seen by your values, what you say and do at home, what you allow into your home, how you handle problems, stress, disappointment, and... by how much you love
- e. **John 13:34-35** - *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*
- f. But admittedly, transparency is not always easy...

In 1986, Robert Fulghum wrote a best-selling book titled, *All I Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. In a follow-up book, he then talks about grown children coming home again. Fulghum writes that often when grown kids come back home, they will laugh and reminisce about things they got away with when they were younger that mom and dad never found out about. He recalls that on one visit, his own children began reminiscing. His oldest son said, “Dad, when I was 14, and you and mom were gone for a while, I went out to the garage, got in the car, started it up, backed it out, drove it around the block several times, and then put it back. And you never knew it.”

Everybody laughed, and then his other son spoke up: “Another time when you and Mom went to the grocery store, we kids went out in the backyard and smoked a cigar. You came home early, and we thought for sure we’d been caught. But you never knew, and we got away with it.” Once again, everybody laughed.

Then, Fulghum wrote, he said to his children, “You know you didn’t know about some of the things your mom and I got away with.” Suddenly the room got quiet. “What are you talking about?” his oldest son asked. “Well, for instance, you never knew that we took a cut of all the money grandma sent you at Christmas. You never knew that sometimes, when we told you we weren’t eating leftovers, they really were leftovers, and your mother had just made them up to look like something else. And you never knew that when you called home from camp because you were so homesick, and we told you how much we missed you, and wished you were home with us too? Well...that wasn’t entirely accurate.”

- g. We laugh at these, maybe even wince a little bit, but a father and a husband who is willing to be transparent with his life builds trust and security
  - i. Men, fight that urge to portray the macho man who never makes a mistake
  - ii. Own your weaknesses and, in that moment, begin to gain the strength that comes from having no facades and barriers between you and your family
  - iii. But transparency must also be done in wisdom and we will come back to that in a few minutes

### 3. Possess an Unselfish Work Ethic (2:9)

- a. *Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.*
- b. Take note that the word here is “unselfish,” not “obsessive”
- c. Too many of our children and our families are ignored because of the all-encompassing need to succeed and achieve – that is an unhealthy extreme.
- d. But the opposite extreme is just as unhealthy and dangerous for the family
  - i. A lazy man is one who destroys the foundation of his home
  - ii. **Prov 10:4** tells us *Lazy hands make for poverty...*
  - iii. Poverty in the original Hebrew means to lack but also to impoverish oneself
    - 1. You’re hurting yourself
    - 2. And it is just not you but those you are called to care for who are also being hurt
- e. Our children learn primarily in three different ways – being taught, by example, and by doing
  - i. Our work ethic should be a strong one, but it should never overwhelm or overshadow our children

### 4. Demonstrate Genuine Spirituality (2:10)

- a. *You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed*
- b. Men – God commissioned you to be the spiritual heads of your home
- c. Whether you think you are or not, whether you want to believe it or not
- d. You will either lead your family closer to God or take them further away
- e. That begins by demonstrating genuine spirituality – what does that mean?
  - i. I think it begins with four letters...
    - 1. **NJOS** – Not Just on Sunday
  - ii. **Psalms 1:2** – tells us that we should meditate on God’s Word day and night
    - 1. Be aware of that word meditate
    - 2. It is yet another that the enemy has twisted
    - 3. To meditate means to dwell on
- f. When you do this, you are demonstrating a godly lifestyle that your children will see and have imprinted into their hearts and minds

5. Be a Positive Influence (2:11-12)

- a. *For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting, and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.*
- b. This is what a godly father, a godly husband, and a godly man does – he creates a positive environment
- c. In his 1977 bestseller book *The Total Man* – Dan Benson wrote how our words have such great impact
  - i. This was written nearly 50 years ago but would we think this has gotten any better?
  - ii. He wrote that for every positive word spoken by dads to their kids, they speak 10 negative ones
  - iii. Words like don't, you can't, stop that, and no come very easily – not so the ones of encouragement, comfort, and praise
  - iv. The author goes on to say that the entire personality and dynamic of relationships between fathers and their children would change if those percentages were reversed
    1. For that matter so would relationships between husbands and wives
- d. Certainly, Jesus brought correction and even discipline to His disciples, but He also encouraged them
  - i. Laughter, joy, and positive words encourage those around us
  - ii. **Prov 17:22** – *a merry heart is good like a medicine*
- e. But there is one other aspect of being positive that is also needed
  - i. That is guarding your young children from the harshness and overwhelming negativity of the world
  - ii. We are exposing our children to things that they are too young for and not mature enough to handle
  - iii. You may have heard it said, “You need to learn that life is hard...”
  - iv. Children are limited in what they can observe and process without damage to their hearts, their spirits, and their minds
    1. Your children do not need to know if you are having problems with finances
    2. They do not need to see or hear you having an intense argument
    3. They also do not need to get anything and everything they want
      - a. If you do that, you are already beginning to set them up to fail and erode the importance of our third point of having a strong work ethic
      - b. That is something they do need to learn early – you don't always get what you want and what you do want should most often be earned
    4. Oh, and they do not need to be screamed at!
  - v. Is it any wonder that our children are growing up to become such messes up adults with such psychological problems when they are being exposed to things they should not see?

1. Children should NOT be allowed to watch horror or gory movies
    - a. This is why I caution you every year to the dangers of Halloween
    - b. It is not only spiritually dangerous but emotionally and mentally as well
  2. They should absolutely not be permitted ever to see anything of a sexual nature
  3. They must be protected from things such as the occult (HP movies, etc...)
- vi. Keep their lives positive and guarded for as long as you can – the harsh realities of life will be coming to them all too soon
- There is no doubt that it is not easy to be a Man of God in today's culture (or a woman of God, for that matter)
    - But easy or not does not change who we are called to be
    - God designated you, men, to be the head of your home
    - The problem is that we have done it so poorly for so long that those we have been called to love, protect, and provide for may be at the place where they feel they cannot trust us to do it
    - Because, like Adam, we continue to abdicate our responsibility by standing by silently
  - Sadly, the world's definition of what a real man is has infiltrated the church and perverted the true definition
    - A godly man models himself after Jesus Christ
    - He is humbly confident, a servant, gentle, temperate, disciplined, and selfless
    - How many of those traits describe you this morning?