

“Godly Father” By E A Terry Delivered June 17, 2018

Proverbs 3: 1- 18; Ephesians 6: 1 – 4; Luke 15:11 – 32; **1st Thessalonians 2: 1 – 12 (Sermon)**

Today is Father’s Day. We have come here today to honor our Heavenly Father and to hear His word to us today.

Also on Father’s Day we honor our earthly fathers.

The book of 1st Thessalonians was addressed to the church at Thessalonica.

While chapter 2 is not directly dealing with fathers or mothers; the Godly principles the Apostle Paul records in chapter 2 are applicable to **all of us** since the church is made up of Christians.

Notice in verse 7 Paul writes, ***“just as a nursing mother cares for her children so we cared for you.”***

What Paul is saying is that his ministry with the church at Thessalonica was very much like a parent dealing with their children.

Paul established this church so Paul was their spiritual father.

When God blesses us with children we must never forget that these are God’s children and that God has given us the privilege and the responsibility of raising His children for Him.

God expects every parent to teach His children to know, to love, and to serve Him.

Since children learn by observing, all parents are to model Godly characteristics in their daily life.

As parents we will all have to stand before Almighty God and give an account of the way we have raised the children God has entrusted to our care.

When we examine our text from 1st Thessalonians we will find 7 traits of a Godly father.

Since today is Fathers Day I will address my comments mainly to fathers however these are traits that every Christian should embrace and every Christian should model in our daily lives.

First the Apostle Paul tells us a Godly father loves his children and a Godly father is able to openly express his love for his children.

In verse 8 we read; ***“Because we loved you so much we were delighted to share with you not only the Gospel of God but our lives as well.”***

Sadly many times I hear many people say, *“I know my father loved me but he never told me he loved me”* or *“It was rare for my father to hug me or to kiss me.”*

A Godly father loves his children and a Godly father constantly and openly expresses his love for his children.

Our best example of fatherhood is our Heavenly Father.

Our Heavenly Father loves us unconditionally and sacrificially.

Our Heavenly Father's love for us is vividly explained in the story of the prodigal son.

As you know the son left his father and wasted his inheritance.

Then the son "***came to himself***" and returned home.

The Bible tells us the father had been watching and waiting for his son to return.

When the father saw his son in the distance the Bible says the father ran to his son, hugged him, kissed him, and restored him as a son.

A Godly father loves his children and constantly and openly expresses his love.

The second trait of a Godly father is also found in verse 8.

Notice, "***We were delighted to share the Gospel of God with you***".

God has given fathers the primary responsibility of being the spiritual leader in the home.

Sadly many fathers have refused or have neglected their God-given responsibility of being the spiritual head of their homes.

Thank God that when this happens that many of you mothers have taken up that role.

Our lesson from Proverbs clearly teaches our responsibility of teaching our children about The Lord.

When your child was baptized or dedicated as parents you made a solemn promise to God and to your child to teach them about The Lord and to bring your children up in a Christian home.

Proverbs 22:6 tells us, "***Train up a child in the way he should go...***"

If we really love our children we will want the very best for them.

And as you know God promises unlimited blessings to everyone who loves Him and obeys Him.

However, God also warns us that those who refuse the gift of His Son Jesus are doomed.

A Godly father delights in teaching his children the good news of Jesus Christ.

The third characteristic of a Godly father is also found in verse 8; they share their life with their children.

Godly fathers spend quality time with their children.

If you really love someone you will want to spend time with him or her.

You share each other's victories as well as each other's defeats.

You share each other's joys and their sorrows.

There is no way to really know or to understand your children unless you frequently spend quality time with them.

Watching Sponge Bob or Veggie Tales on T.V. with your child may not be the most educational or the most entertaining thing you could do but your time with your child should be the most enjoyable thing you do.

None of us know how much time we have left to spend with our families.

You may only have one more day or one more year left.

We all need to make the most of each day.

The fourth trait of a Godly father is living the gospel.

This is also in verse 8.

It is one thing to hear the gospel.

But it is quite another thing to **live** the gospel.

Children learn by example.

Sharing your life with your children also includes letting them see how a Godly father prays before making hard decisions.

This is important because one day they will face hard decisions.

When we make a mistake we need to admit it and ask for forgiveness.

If confessing our sins is important to mom and dad confessing their sins will be important to their children.

Children need to be included in a family's financial decisions and learn the importance of financially giving to The Lord off of the top every week.

Children need to know their father always tells the truth and that he always keeps his promises.

Children need to see how a Godly father handles stress as well as how to love, honor, help, and encourage their mother.

Research has shown that the kind of father a child has greatly influences the kind of parent they will become.

As parents we each need to ask ourselves "*Am I a coach or am I a critic?*"

In 1st Corinthians 11:1 Paul told the Corinthian church, "***Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ.***"

Please notice Paul did not say, *“Do everything I do.”*

Paul said, *“Do everything which is Christ-like or follow the example of Christ.”*

Paul was not perfect and neither are we.

Being a parent can be an interesting and at times a very trying experience.

But we don't have to go it alone.

In Matthew 28:20 Jesus said, ***“Lo, I am with you even to the end of the age.”***

When we become frustrated or we are experiencing pain our loving Heavenly Father comes alongside of us to encourage us and to comfort us.

The fifth trait of a Godly father is hard working.

We find that in verse 9 that ***“Surely you remember we worked day and night in order not to be a burden to anyone.”***

I was blessed with a Godly father and there was not a lazy bone in my father's body.

Most of my life he worked two jobs in addition to pastoring a church until The Lord called him home.

Today as I see and hear about absentee fathers, irresponsible fathers, and/or lazy fathers who refuse to accept their responsibility of providing for their families I thank God that I had a father who taught me and modeled good work habits.

At a very early age we need to give our children jobs in our homes and hold them accountable for doing them.

Many fathers say, *“I provide for my family.”*

But what they mean is that they bring a paycheck home each week.

But providing for our families includes much more than meeting their physical needs.

What about encouraging our children?

What about providing a loving, caring, and supportive Christian home?

What about providing spiritual leadership in the family?

1st Timothy 5:8 states, ***“Any one who does not provide for their relatives; and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”***

A Godly father is hard working and provides for all of his families spiritual, emotional, and physical needs.

The sixth trait is a Godly father is spiritual.

Listen to what Paul says in verse 10.

“You are witnesses, and so is God of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you.”

Remember in verse 8 Paul said we told you the gospel and now here in verse 10 Paul said you are witnesses that we lived a *“holy, righteous and blameless life.”*

As Christians our speech and our actions are all governed by our belief in Jesus Christ.

God calls all of us to reflect the character of God.

The way we live will either lead our family closer to God or further away from God.

If we carry a big Bible to church on Sunday but never read it during the week, our children will notice and quickly conclude that reading the Bible is not important.

If we criticize others our children will question if we really love other people.

If you don't pray with your children they will quickly conclude praying is not important to you.

If you do not make your financial offering a priority each week your children will quickly conclude that bringing an offering to God each week is not important.

It is essential that our children observe that our Christianity is not a ritual but rather they observe that our Christianity is a way of life for us 24/7.

The seventh trait of a Godly father **is being an encourager**. In verse 12 we read; *“encouraging, comforting, and urging you to live lives worthy of God who calls you into His kingdom and glory.”*

Remember Satan always tries to discourage people therefore we need to counteract Satan's attempts by providing encouragement to our children.

Notice all of these words in verse 12 are all positive words.

You all know you can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar.

Now, as you know being a parent is challenging and there are many times we need to discipline our children and to say no to our children.

But we need to always build them up and never tear them down.

In verse 4 of our lesson from Ephesians Paul says, *“Fathers, do not exasperate your children. Instead bring them up in the training and instruction of The Lord.”*

As a father, it is easy to demand respect by saying; *“Do it because I said so!”*

But our lessons clearly teach us that a Godly father teaches and models the Christian life we want for our children.

In verse 6 Paul in effect said, *“We could have asserted our authority as apostles but we chose not to. Instead we chose to lead you to The Lord by loving you, encouraging you, comforting you, and modeling a Christian life before you.”*

As we apply this text we each need to ask ourselves: *“Am I being a Godly father?”*

We must never forget that God will hold every parent accountable for the way we raise His children.

As fathers, we have all made mistakes and we would have loved to have handled some situations differently.

So we need to admit our mistakes and ask God to forgive us and to give us a chance to right the wrong.

To be a Godly father we need to unconditionally and sacrificially love our family just like our Heavenly Father unconditionally and sacrificially loves us.

To be a Godly father we need to freely and openly show and affirm our love on a regular basis.

To be a Godly father we need to openly share our life with our children.

To be a Godly father we need to teach our children about Jesus and to model Christian values in our daily life.

To be a Godly father we need to work hard and unselfishly provide for all of our family’s physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

To be a Godly father we need to encourage and help our children to be everything that God planned for them.

Being a father carries a lot of responsibility.

However, being a parent can and should be a real blessing.

Being a parent is a very rewarding experience.

When God has blessed us with children we need to remember that these are God’s precious children and that God is trusting us to love them, teach them, provide for them, protect them, and to encourage them to know, and to love The Lord, as well as to serve their creator God.

As parents we will all have to stand before Almighty God and we will have to give an account for the way we have raised the children God has entrusted to us. **AMEN**