

Slide 1

Committed Fathers

Deuteronomy 11: 18-21

Introduction

1. Being a good father is one of the greatest challenges a man may face in life.
2. Many of us who are fathers may look back upon our days spent parenting our children and think of the mistakes we have made.
3. None of us are perfect. Each of us struggles in our own attempts to guide our children into adulthood.
4. For some of us, our children seem to turn out well in spite of our mistakes.
5. Others of us have children who drift away from the God we love despite our best efforts.
6. There are two things I believe are true of each father here this morning:
 - a. Each of us wants our sons and daughters to turn out the best they possibly can.
 - b. Each of us wants our children to become sharers with us in eternal life.
6. That being said, let me say . . .
 - a. Our children are not our possessions or our property. God has loaned them to us for a brief period of time.
 - b. There are no short cuts to being a good father. It takes time and consistent effort.
 - c. While providing for the basic needs of our children is important (i.e., food, clothing and shelter), being a godly father involves the spiritual well-being of our children as well.
7. This morning I would like to share some truths from God's word which I believe will help us as we seek to guide our children into a loving, faithful relationship with the God we serve.

Slide 2

I. Guard Your Heart (Proverbs 4:23)

A. WITH ALL DILIGENCE

1. Most of our translations read, “Watch over (keep) your heart with all diligence (vigilance).”
2. The NIV84 has, “Above all else, guard your heart.”
3. Literally, it reads, “More than every [other] guarding, guard your heart.”
4. Solomon exhorts each of us to guard our hearts more zealously than anything else we treasure.

2a**B. FROM IT FLOW THE SPRINGS OF LIFE**

1. Another translation says that “it is the source of life” (HCSB).
2. What is the heart?
 - a. It is not the physical organ that beats within our chests.
 - b. It includes our
 - 1) mind (Proverbs 3:3; 6:32; 7:7b),
 - 2) will (Proverbs 11:20; 14:14),
 - 3) emotions (Proverbs 15:15, 30),
 - 4) whole inner being (Proverbs 3:5).
3. What does Solomon mean that “from it flow the springs of life” and “it is the source of life” (HCSB)?
4. It is this: “life proceeds from the heart; the heart is life’s source”.
5. It sends up the thoughts that our tongues speak.
6. This is why Solomon wrote, “Life and death are in the power of the tongue” (Proverbs 18:21a).
7. To guard our heart means to be careful about our thoughts and the words we speak.
8. All of this is important because our children will pick up these principles which guide our lives.

Slide 3**C. WHERE OUR TREASURE IS, THERE IS OUR HEART ALSO (MATTHEW 6:21)**

“for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21, NASB95).

1. What fills your time? What occupies your interests?
 - a. The money you have set aside?
 - b. The things you own?
 - c. Your accomplishments in life?
2. Is it the kingdom of God, His rule and His reign within your life?
3. Is it His righteousness? The desire to do what He considers to be right?
4. Whatever your treasure may be, Jesus said that is where your heart will be?
5. It is where you will invest your time and your energy.

3a**D. OUT OF THE ABUNDANCE OF THE HEART THE MOUTH SPEAKS (MATTHEW 12:34, NKJV, ESV)**

1. Jesus went on to say, “the good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil” (Matthew 12:35).
2. In Luke 6:45 we find Jesus saying that a man speaks “from that which fills his heart.”
3. If our relationship with God is that which fills our heart, then we will bring forth good, both in what we do and in what we say.
4. Our children will observe this in us and be encouraged to do the same.

Slide 4**II. Be a Student of God’s Word**

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15, NASB95)

Slide 5**A. IT IS A LAMP UNTO OUR FEET AND A LIGHT UNTO OUR PATH (PSALM 119:105)**

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:105, NASB95)

1. The only way we are going to set the proper direction in life for ourselves and for our children is through the guidance that God’s word gives us.
2. Our children need to see that it is the guiding principle in our lives.
3. When we choose a direction in life, it is based upon what God’s word says to us.

5a**B. IT KEEPS US FROM SINNING AGAINST GOD (PSALM 119:11)**

“Your word I have treasured (hidden, NKJV) in my heart, that I may not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:11, NASB95)

1. None of us as Christians want to sin against God.
2. The psalmist says that to keep from doing this we must “hide” or “treasure” God’s word in our innermost being.
2. David put it another way in Psalm 1 — he wrote that the blessed man is the one who “meditates” on the law of the Lord “day and night” (Psalm 1:2).
3. When our children see that it is our goal to please God and that we apply the truths of His Word to guide us, they will learn the things which are important to us.

Slide 6**III. Love Your Wife**

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,” (Ephesians 5:25, NASB95)

Slide 7**A. AS YOU LOVE YOURSELF (EPHESIANS 5:33)**

“. . . each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself” (Ephesians 5:33).

1. Many years ago at a Faulkner-Breechen Marriage Seminar, Carl Breechen said that the best thing we can do for our children is to love their mother.
2. Paul said that we should love our wives even as we love ourselves.
3. When our children see that we love the woman who is their mother to this extent, they will see the value we place upon our marriage.

7a**B. BE UNDERSTANDING — SHOW HONOR (1 PETER 3:7)**

“You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.” (1 Peter 3:7, NASB95)

1. Are you short with your wife, critical of her every action.
2. Or, do you honor her in front of your children and before others — they will remember this.

Slide 8**IV. Teach Your Children Well**

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4, NASB95)

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.” (Colossians 3:21, NASB95)

A. DO NOT PROVOKE OR EXASPERATE YOUR CHILDREN

1. In Ephesians 6:4, Paul said, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger.”
 - a. How do we provoke our children to anger?
 - 1) Sometimes, we make unreasonable demands of them.
 - 2) At other times, we may set petty rules which have no logical reason behind them except that we are the parent and we may seek to do as we please.
 - 3) There are other times when it is evident that we are favoring one child over his or her siblings. This will cause the others to become angry at the unfairness of it all.
 - b. There may be times when our children become angry at us, not because we have provoked them, but because . . .
 - 1) we have called them on their improper conduct, or
 - 2) refused to give them something for which they were not ready, or
 - 3) prevented them from doing something that was harmful to them.
2. In Colossians 3:21, Paul wrote, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children.”
 - a. Some fathers constantly criticize their children.
 - b. If we do this as fathers, our children may come to believe they can do nothing right, and thus become discouraged.
 - c. We should correct our children when they do wrong, but we should also be quick to . . .
 - 1) Encourage them when they have done their best, but failed, and

- 2) Praise them when they have done well.
3. In this way, we will help them find balance in life and be able to keep pushing forward in a world that is not always kind.

8a**B. BRING THEM UP IN THE TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD**

1. One of the most difficult parts of parenting is finding that balance as we seek to raise our children.
2. If we are too permissive, we may find that we spoil them.
3. On the other hand, if we are too strict, they may rebel.
4. Our goal is to help them make Christ the center of their relationships, their teaching and their learning.
5. To do this in a proper way requires God's guidance.

Conclusion

1. I believe that all of us want our children to become faithful servants of God as they mature.
2. The one father that all of our children should honor this day and all days is the Lord our God.
3. Men, what values are you working to instill within your children.
4. Are they learning to love God and to devote their lives to Him in faithful service.
5. Do you, as a father, ask God every day to . . .
 - a. Help you be the father to your children that He wants you to be?
 - b. Help your sons and your daughters to become the men and women, the fathers and daughters He wants them to be?
6. If not, why not start today?
7. You cannot lead where you have not gone.
8. If you aren't a Christian, make the decision today to submit you life to Jesus.