

## A Father's Prayer Colossians 3:12-21

### **Introduction:**

We live in a confusing time for young men.

It seems that popular culture cannot decide what kind of men we are to be.

“Are men supposed to be strong providers, or are they supposed to be soft and sensitive?”<sup>1</sup>

Most women in our current culture want a man who is sensitive but not weak.

Men are criticized for being macho, so they soften up, and it is then that culture criticizes them for being wimps and losers.

How can a man be sensitive without being perceived as weak?

There is a very thin line between showing sensitivity and being seen as weak.

One thing is universally emerging, there is a connection between the strength of a man and his ability to be sensitive.

Are men to be the more traditional strong and rational type or the more modern caring and sensitive type?

Young men are being given mixed signals.

The church must consistently reinforce a godly view of manliness for the sake of the young men who will hopefully become fathers, leaders of their homes, and someday leaders in the church.

Colossians 3:12-21 instructs, “So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.”

The Scriptures make it clear that new converts, thus real men, are to put on a heart of long-suffering toward others, add characteristics of endurance and forgiveness, put on love, let the peace of Christ decide matters in [their] hearts, let the message about Christ be an integral and permanent living force within [them], and do all [words and deeds] in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

These individual qualities (v. 12), interpersonal qualities (v. 13), and the indispensable quality (v. 14) affect the family in the home and the family of God.

Job was a man of great strength and endurance who was also tender with his children.

He constantly prayed for them and was concerned about their spiritual health.

Listen to Job 1:5; “When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings

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<sup>1</sup> Jim L. Wilson, [\*Fresh Sermons\*](#) (Fresno, CA: Willow City Press, 2009).

according to the number of them all; for Job said, ‘Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.’ Thus Job did continually.”

Job nudged his seven sons and three daughters toward holy living.

He sacrificed burnt offerings to cover the possible sins of his children.

Job wanted to make sure that his children were taken care of spiritually.

Another strong man with the right attributes and characteristics was David.

He was one of, if not the greatest, king of Israel, and her greatest warrior.

Yet, David was sensitive to the needs of his children.

### **I. A Father’s Prayer for his Child’s Physical Health.**

In 2 Samuel 12, beginning in verse 16, David fasted and prayed for seven days, asking God to spare his son (2 Samuel 12:16-19).

“**David therefore inquired of God for the child;** and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground. The elders of his household stood beside him in order to raise him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat food with them. Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, ‘Behold, while the child was still alive, we spoke to him and he did not listen to our voice. How then can we tell him that the child is dead, since he might do himself harm!’ But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; so David said to his servants, ‘Is the child dead?’ And they said, ‘He is dead.’”

David sought God’s help for his child in prayer.

David avoided eating food and laid on the ground at night as a demonstration of his remorse for the sins but may have also demonstrated to God that the child’s recovery was more important to him than food, comfort, or pride.

David inflicted so much pain on himself while the child was sick that his servants were afraid to tell him the child had died, fearing “he might do himself harm.”

The fear of the servants proved unjustified, so they revealed the truth when David asked a direct question.

The requested reprieve for the child was not granted.

After the baby’s death, David stopped his mourning, worshiped God, and broke his fast (vv. 20-23).

“So David arose from the ground, washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he came into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he came to his own house, and when he requested, they set food before him and he ate. Then his servants said to him, ‘What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food.’ He said, ‘While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, “Who knows, the Lord may be gracious to me, that the child may live.” But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.’”

David surprised everyone with his reaction to the news.

He prepared himself for a new life that would begin in the presence of the Lord.

He got up from the ground, cleaned himself up, cleansed himself to go into the house of the LORD, and there he worshiped.

Then, he returned home and broke his fast.

David found the prophet to be trustworthy; in verse 14, Nathan had said, "...because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die."

The word of the Lord had not changed; the Lord himself had not changed, nor did divine grace change.

David came to accept that it was time for him to live in such a way that he would go to his son.

David prayed for his unnamed son's physical health.

## **II. A Father's Prayer for his Child's Spiritual Health.**

While David prepared materials for the Temple to be built, he charged all who would take part in building it to be diligent.

He ordered Israel's leaders to help his son by seeking the LORD with all their heart and soul.

"He called...his son, Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel" (1 Chronicles 22:6-10; read 7-10).

David encouraged his son to obey the LORD and build a magnificent temple for him (1 Chronicles 22:11-13).

David prayed for Solomon's success, his ability to judge wisely and objectively while following rational thought, and his willingness to keep the law of the LORD.

He prayed that Solomon would carry out or perform the rules and decisions of God for Israel while being strong and courageous.

He prayed that his son would not be afraid or grow discouraged in his work.

David made ample preparations for the building of the temple and ample preparations for his son's spiritual health after his passing.

David was preparing to build the Temple in verses 1-5, but when the word of the LORD came to him (v. 8), he set aside his desire to do his will and fulfilled the LORD's will.

He taught his son that the LORD's will is more important than your own.

He taught his son to follow the discretion (wise judgments) and understanding (discernment) of God.

He taught his son to obey the commands of the LORD.

David solicited help from "all the leaders of Israel" for his son (vv. 17-19).

David prayed for his son spiritual health.

## **III. A Father's Prayer for his Child's Inner Health.**

The private prayer of David closely resembles the way he prayed for Solomon in public.

In the final days of David, he gives Solomon the plans for the Temple, including a catalog of the materials he has collected for it (1 Chronicles 29).

David then stands before the people and prays a dedicatory prayer for the material.

He testifies to God's glory (1 Chronicles 29:10-13).

He testifies to God's grace (vv. 14-18).

David asks the LORD to give Solomon a heart completely dedicated to Him (v. 19).

"A perfect heart" refers to an intact, full quantity or complete mind, heart, or conscience.

A temple without wholehearted devotion to the law was an empty gesture, as David understood.

Solomon needed full faculties of mind for thinking, volition for decision making, strong emotions toward God and the completion of the temple, also a good conscience to keep the law and finish that for which his father made provision.

David prayed for his son inner health.

### **Application:**

A father's prayer for his child(ren) should include requests for physical, spiritual, and inner health.

Pray for your child's physical health.

Request of God energy, flexibility, strength, and a lack of illness and disease so your child can perform daily tasks and live comfortably in his/her condition.

Make an appeal to God for sensible nourishment, good sleep, and proper rest for your child.

Pray for your child's spiritual health.

Invite God to be present in your child's life, providing wise judgment and discernment between good and evil.

Ask God to help your child live in the law of the Lord, observing God's commandments.

Call upon God to give strength and courage for your child to be successful in spiritual matters.

Pray for your child's inner health.

Petition God for the mental faculties needed by your child to understand God's instructions, His warnings or admonition, and His authoritative rule.

Plead with God for calmness and peace in the conscience of your child.

### **Conclusion:**

How can a strong man be sensitive without being weak?

Follow God's instructions from Colossians 3:12-21.

Strong men know how to control themselves, manage their interpersonal relationships, and keep the indispensable quality of love as the binding agent which brings completeness, perfection, and maturity.

Just as Paul moved from individual to interpersonal attributes, the church needs to pray for the physical, spiritual, and inner health of her men.

A father's prayer should closely resemble the prayers of David and his life should model the kind of Christian he wants his child(ren) to be.

Do you have discretion, understanding, and a heart to keep God's commandments?

Hear the gospel—a message of God's love and desire to have a close relationship with you (Romans 10:17; we would love to study with you).

Believe in God and His Son (John 20:30 and 31).

Repent—change your mind and turn away from your sins (Acts 17:30 and 31).

Confess Christ as the Son of God (Romans 10:9 and 10).

Be baptized for the remission/forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38).

Live faithfully to God, learning and growing “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

If you are not walking with the Lord and serving Him, please repent; God our Savior “desires [that] all men be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).