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Dad, The Family Shepherd

JOHN 10:10-15; 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1

Introduction

1. If you are a father here today, I want to congratulate you because God has given you a responsibility that surpasses any other you will ever have in your life.
2. It is the responsibility of being the spiritual leader in your family, the family shepherd.
3. I asked that these verses be read from John's gospel this morning because Jesus tells us what the good shepherd, Jesus, does for His sheep.
 - a. He knows His sheep and His sheep know Him (v. 14).
 - b. He is concerned for their well-being.
 - c. He will even lay down His own life for His sheep (v. 11).
4. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, the apostle Paul tells the saints in Corinth to "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ."
5. As fathers, we should make it our goal to say this to our children, "Imitate me as I strive to imitate our Lord."
6. Having said all this, I want each of you who is a father here today to know that Satan's goal in your family is to neutralize you as the leader in your home.
7. He knows that if he can neutralize you as the leader of your family, he has effectively neutralized your family.
8. This means He will tempt you and attack you in an effort to destroy your spiritual leadership in your home.
9. If you are already passive and indifferent to the things of God and to the spiritual leadership of your home, Satan will not bother you because he knows he has already neutralized your influence in your home.
10. However, if you are a man who is serious about following our Lord, you can be

sure that Satan will be on the attack.

11. This morning, I hope to help each of us who are fathers here this morning to better understand Satan's strategy against us and our families, and how we can be victorious in the war He is waging.

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I. Satan's War Upon Your Family

A. HE IS DETERMINED TO SEVER THE RELATIONSHIP YOU HAVE WITH YOUR WIFE

1. We who are husbands are to love our wives, even as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25).

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

2. We are to love them even as we love ourselves (Ephesians 5:28).

“So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;” (Ephesians 5:28, NASB95)

3. Satan works to sever this relationship by enticing us to focus upon other women outside of our wives.
4. He did this with David, the second king of Israel.
5. His adultery with a woman named Bathsheba resulted in the death of the son conceived through their sin.
6. His family was never the same:
 - a. One son, Amnon raped his half sister, Tamar.
 - b. Her brother Absalom later killed Amnon.
 - c. Ultimately, Absalom was killed in an effort to usurp his father's throne.
7. The only way we can keep this strategy from being successful in our own marriages is to determine to be “one -woman” men.
8. When we look at Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus, we find that one of the qualifications he places upon those men seeking to be elders, is that they are “the husband of one wife” (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6).

9. As I shared with you a little over a month ago, on Mother's Day, John Wooden, the head men's basketball coach at UCLA for 29 years once said, "The best thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother."
10. If Satan's goal is to sever our relationship with our wives, our goal must be to reaffirm our commitment to them every day.

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11. First, we are faithful to our wives *with our eyes*.
 - a. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:28, NASB95)
 - b. A one-woman man has cultivated a special kind of blindness.
 - c. Long ago, it was a man named Job who said, "I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?" (Job 31:1, NKJV)
 - d. Today, Satan has made it possible for a man to violate our Lord's command in more ways than we can count (phone, tablet, computer, TV, advertisements, etc.).
 - e. Our wives and our children need to know that we have eyes only for the woman to whom we are married.

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12. Second, we are faithful to our wives *with our minds*.
 - a. Our minds are where Satan seeks to control us.
 - b. He knows that if he can influence our minds, he can influence our behavior.
 - c. In Paul's second letter to the saints in Corinth, he wrote, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ," (2 Corinthians 10:3-5, NASB95)

- d. There is an old proverb which says,
 **“Sow a thought, reap an action;
 Sow an action, reap a habit;
 Sow a habit, reap a character;
 Sow a character, reap a destiny.”**

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- 13. We are faithful to our wives *with our lips*.
 - a. We do not flirt with other women.
 - b. We don't joke about looking for a new model.
 - c. We affirm, praise and encourage our wives.
 - d. They must know that we consider our marriages as sacred and holy.

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- 14. We are faithful to our wives *with our feet*.
 - a. In Paul's first letter to the Christians in Corinth, he wrote, “Flee from sexual immorality” (1 Corinthians 6:18, ESV).
 - b. This is what Joseph, the great grandson of Abraham, did when Potiphar's wife tried to entice him to lie with her — he ran (Genesis 39:13).
 - c. As husbands and fathers, we remove ourselves from the situation.
 - d. We change the channel, walk out of the movie theater, install a filter on our phone, tablet or computer.
- 15. All of these things we do to keep Satan from severing our relationship with our wife.

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- 1. How does he do this?
- 2. He does it by simply luring you away from your God-given responsibilities.
- 3. In Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus, he instructed the fathers not to “provoke” their children to anger, but to “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

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4. Men, to accomplish this, we must be present in our children's lives in two ways:
5. First, we must be present *physically*.
 - a. During the time when Jesus was a boy, the mother had charge of all the children from the time they were born until they were somewhere between 5 and 7 years of age.
 - b. At that time, the training of the sons would pass from the mother to the father.
 - c. A son would work alongside his father, learning his father's trade.
 - d. During that time, a father would teach his son everything he knew about his trade, being a man, loving his future wife, honoring God, etc.
 - e. Each son was learning from his father's example how to become an adult male.
 - f. Now, because almost all of us as fathers work away from home, we no longer have those extended periods of time with our sons and daughters.
 - g. Less time means less influence in the lives of our children.
 - h. So, we must make every effort we can to be physically present with our children.
 - i. If we don't Satan will make sure he fills the void.

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6. Second, we must be present *emotionally*.
 - a. It is possible for us as fathers to be physically present in our homes, but emotionally distant from our children.
 - b. When we are emotionally present for our children, we are attuned to their feelings — they know that we value them, not just as our children, but as those who are made in God's image.
 - c. We give them our undivided attention (we listen and make eye contact).
 - d. We allow them to see how we handle our feelings (i.e., joy, anger, frustration, etc.) in a way that honors God.

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C. HE WILL WORK TO SEPARATE YOU FROM THOSE PRACTICES WHICH WILL MAKE YOUR SPIRITUALLY EFFECTIVE

1. Satan isn't concerned with the fact that you are spiritually active.
2. His concern is that you do not become spiritually **effective**.
3. Spiritual activity is not the same as spiritual effectiveness.
4. Men, one of the ways in which Satan works to keep us from being effective in our families and in the church is to **keep us out of God's Word**.
 - a. Jesus, in response to Satan's first temptation of Him in the wilderness said, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4, NASB95).
 - b. In Deuteronomy 32:46-47, we find Moses' final charge to the Israelites before his death:

"Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you—they are your life."
(Deuteronomy 32:46–47a, NIV84)
 - c. Men, Satan isn't concerned with the fact that you believe the Bible to be God's inspired word.
 - d. He isn't bothered with the fact that you have several translations or even a study Bible.
 - e. He just wants to keep you from reading and studying it, because he knows you can't teach your children what you don't know.
 - ❑ Men, these are not idle words, they are your life and the life of your family.

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5. Another way in which Satan keeps us as fathers from being effective in our families is by **keeping us from applying God's Word in our lives**.
 - a. James, the brother of Jesus, wrote in his letter to those Christians who had been scattered because of persecution, "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (James 1:22, NASB95).

- b. God's goal is not for us to simply know His Word, but for us to obey it, to **do** the Word.
- c. In the next two verses (vv. 23-24), James tells us that to hear God's Word and not do it is to be like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and then forgets what he saw.
- d. The scribe Ezra made it his goal to study God's Word, to apply it in his own life and then to teach it to others (cf. Ezra 7:10).
- e. To study God's Word and teach it to others without applying it in our own lives is to imitate the Pharisees of Jesus day.
- f. Jesus said of them, "all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them" (Matthew 23:3, NASB95).

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- 6. A final way in which Satan keeps us as fathers from being effective in our families is **by keeping us off our knees**.
 - a. By this I mean that he keeps from praying as we should.

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).
 - b. For what do we pray?
 - 1) The daily decisions we as fathers make at work and at home.
 - 2) Our marriages, that we may be protected from Satan's assaults.
 - 3) Our children,
 - a) that God would draw them to Himself,
 - b) that He would keep us in tune with them and their needs,
 - c) that He would keep them strong so that they can withstand the pressure that comes from their peers.
 - 4) That God remind us as fathers the battle is His.

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- c. It was David of old who said, “The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them” (Psalm 34:7, NASB95).

Conclusion

1. It was Solomon, who, in Psalm 127:3 wrote, “children are a gift from the Lord.”
2. He compared them to “arrows in the hand of a warrior” (v. 4) and said, “how blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them” (v. 5).
3. If you are a father here this morning, my question to you is this: “How well are you doing at shepherding your children?”
4. David, who called the Lord, His Shepherd, wrote in Psalm 23:3, “He guides me in the path of righteousness for His name’s sake.”
5. Fathers, where are you guiding your children? Are you leading them heavenward.
6. You cannot lead where you yourself aren’t willing to go.
7. If you haven’t yet submitted your life to Jesus Christ in obedient faith, why not do so today?