

A Father With His Children

Introduction. We're in a sacred gathering today where we come together to share in the joy of God's Word, to nourish our souls, and to strengthen our bonds as a body of faithful Christians. It's Father's Day — a day dedicated to honoring the critical role that fathers play in the lives of their families.

As spiritual leaders, fathers guide their children with wisdom and love, providing strength in times of need and nurturing the growth of faith. Just as our heavenly Father cares for us, earthly fathers have the privilege of emulating the example of Christ.

Although the beginning of the Thessalonian church had its difficulties (Acts 17:1-9), the way that Paul handled himself was not one of them. In 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12, Paul tells his brethren about his concern for them. His sincerity was demonstrated by his refusal to use flattery to gain their approval. Paul's only motive was to establish them in the Lord.

In verse 11 Paul likens himself to a father with his children, and he uses three words which vividly describe the action of a godly father. Fathers have a vital role in nurturing faith, establishing strong families, and leaving a lasting legacy. Let's examine Paul's words and see how fathers can lead with integrity.

I. "Exhort"

- A. To "exhort" means to come to the side of as a helper. It's translated as "pleaded," "begged," "implored," and "encouraged" throughout the NKJV New Testament. This is the action of inviting.
- B. Fathers, your children need more than just punitive discipline. They need you to be like a coach standing on the sideline and urging them to finish strong. They need your listening ear in late night talks.
- C. Their character is molded by significant moments in their life which may not seem very significant in the moment.
 1. Take some time to teach your children to obey you and their mother, and to show you both honor (Ephesians 6:1-3).
 2. Correct them consistently with love when they do wrong, not with fear and abuse (Hebrews 12:9-11).
 3. Teach them the Holy Scriptures so that they'll be wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:15).
- D. Fathers, your children need you. Your wife may be a fantastic mother, but your children need you — and more than just as the breadwinner of the family. Don't take a backseat to the spiritual molding and development of your children.

II. "Comfort"

- A. "Comfort" isn't used here in the sense that we use the word today. The word means to persuade, a gentle influence by words. There's a tone of urgency in the gospel message. Paul has said, "I beseech you" in the old KJV language or "I urge you" in more modern versions.

- B. An angel comforted Elijah (1 Kings 19:5-8). Angels comforted Jesus in temptations and Gethsemane (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43). I can imagine many times when fathers need to do this with their children.
 1. Do you think the father tried to persuade his son to not waste his fortune (Luke 15:11-13)?
 2. Do you think David warned Absalom of revenge against Amnon and of the dangers of usurping the throne (2 Samuel 13:28-29; 15:1-6)?
- C. In the heart of every righteous father is a deep longing to know that his children are walking with courage, integrity, and decency in the holiness of God (3 John 4). The number of ways to get a child to do this is limited, but a father influences along a specific line of conduct (cp. John 11:19, 31; 1 Thessalonians 5:14).
 1. Are you leading the family in weekly Bible readings and discussions (2 Timothy 2:15)?
 2. Are you praying with your children daily, and providing them with regular opportunities to lead prayers in your home (1 Thessalonians 5:17)?
 3. Are you teaching your children that God always comes first, and not work, school functions, sports, hobbies, or vacations (Matthew 6:33)?
 4. Are you bringing them faithfully to all the assemblies of the saints (Hebrews 10:24-25)?
- D. I know that fathers want to teach their kids about hunting and fishing, music and sports. When Grayson was small, we bought him a football, jersey, and a helmet. He and I went out to throw and I stuck the football in his mask. These are funny moments that we'll remember the rest of our lives, but they pale in comparison to the importance of what I just put before you.

III. "Charge"

- A. To "charge" is to urge. It's also translated as "witness" and "testify." This is a word of discipline — a robust, masculine word. Fatherhood isn't for sissies!
- B. However, it involves more than commanding and certainly not nagging. It's constantly coaching, wisely pushing the child in the right direction.
- C. While I can't cover or even think of every topic, I don't want to leave you without some suggestions for what you can testify to your children (cp. Psalm 71:17):
 1. The existence of God and why your children need Him in their lives.
 2. The beauty and complexity of God's incredible creation.
 3. The deity of Christ and the validity of His resurrection.
 4. The inspiration of the Bible.
 5. Why we believe in heaven and hell.
 6. What you have to do to be saved.
 7. The purpose and method of baptism.
 8. Why we reject false doctrines and religious error.
 9. The elements and specifics of true New Testament worship.

Conclusion. The purpose of exhorting, comforting, and charging was for the Thessalonians to "walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory." If fathers will do this with their children, it'll go a long way with them being worthy too. Psalm 112:1-3 says, "Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, Who

delights greatly in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on earth; The generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches will be in his house, And his righteousness endures forever.”

Lots of children have wonderful relationships with their mothers. There’s just something about mothers and their children. But again, they need a relationship with their father. God entrusted you with precious children. Don’t dump your responsibility in the laps of your wife. Your job is to mold them into God-honoring adults.

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