

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO TREAT YOUR FATHER?

The title to the sermon this morning is HOW TO TREAT YOUR FATHER.

- a. I know it's a Bible subject ... and a very important subject.
- b. I believe it is also a needed subject.

This sermon is primarily addressed to the un-married sons and daughters in this congregation.

- a. I hope you will give it the attention and consideration it deserves.

The sermon came to my mind as I was thinking about a passage written by the apostle Paul in his first epistle to Timothy.

- a. **1 Tim 5:1,2 – “Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.”**
 - ▶ NIV: “Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father.

Paul's admonition assumes that you know how a son ought to treat his father and how a daughter ought to treat her father.

- a. But evidence abounds that many sons and daughters do not begin to know how to treat their father.
 - ▶ Many sons and daughters treat their father in a way that is nothing short of disgraceful – and that is the case in too many homes that are supposed to be Christian homes.
 - ▶ Let me be very direct: Young men and young women, if you don't know how to treat your father at home ... you cannot know how to treat older Christian men in the church ... and you cannot know how to be a Christian (a real Christian).

Please think with me about how a father, especially a Christian father, ought to be treated.

1. TREAT YOUR FATHER WITH UNDERSTANDING

You need to understand that your father (because he is a father) is grossly under-valued and under-appreciated in this society.

- a. I'm saying that fathers and fatherhood are grossly under-valued and under-appreciated in this society.
 - ▶ Think about it: Nelson's Complete Book Of Stories, Illustrations, & Quotes (The Ultimate Contemporary Resource for Speakers) has not one page devoted to fathers or fatherhood, but it has 7 pages devoted to mothers and motherhood!
 - 826 pages of quotes and not one page devoted to fathers!
 - ▶ And: The Speaker's Sourcebook compiled by Eleanor Doan is a 300 page book of quotations. It has 2 pages of quotes about mothers ... and only one short poem about fathers!

You need to understand that that your father understands YOU much better than you understand HIM.

- a. I say that because ...
 - ▶ your father has been in YOUR position before, but you have never been in HIS position
 - ▶ he has had YOUR responsibilities before, but you have never had HIS responsibilities
 - ▶ he has experienced the kinds of pressures YOU are experiencing, but you have never experienced the pressures that HE is experiencing
- b. The truth is, your father understands you very well – much better than you understand him.

You need to understand that your father loves you

- a. Not every father loves his children ... but every father in this congregation does!
 - ▶ By any proper measurement of love, your father loves you ... deeply ... unreservedly ... unconditionally ... absolutely ... and unendingly. And there is only one other person in this world who loves you as much – and that's your mother.
 - ▶ You can only hope that when you marry, your spouse will grow to love you as much.
- b. The apostle Paul thought of himself as being **a father** to the Christians in the church at Corinth (and the other churches he had established) – he had that kind of love for them ... and had made that kind of sacrifice for them ... and was that committed to them.
 - ▶ **1Cor 4:15 “For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.”**
 - ▶ **1Thess 2:11 – “you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father**

- does his own children,”
 - ▶ It was heartbreaking to Paul that the Corinthian brethren did not understand and appreciate his love for them. He wrote a letter to them in which he tried to get them to realize and appreciate his love for them.
 - 2Cor 2:4 – ““For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, **but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.**”
 - ▶ As proof of his love for them he made this declaration in his second Corinthian letter:
 - 2Cor 12:15 – “**And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls, ...**”
 - + Jn 15:13 – “**Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.**”
- c. You need to understand that your father has that kind of love for you.
 - ▶ Your father will gladly spend and be spent for your soul.
 - ▶ Your father would lay down his life for you.

You need to understand that your father has a heavy burden of responsibility (including his responsibilities toward you)

- a. Your father has a responsibility to love you ... even when you are unlovable
- b. Your father has a responsibility to set an example for you (in moral behavior, ethical behavior, devotion to God, treatment of others)
- c. He has a responsibility to provide for you (a safe, secure environment, your physical needs, your spiritual needs)
- d. He has a responsibility to “bring you up”
 - ▶ Eph 6:4 – “**And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.**”
 - ▶ 1Th 2:11, 12 – “**as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,**”
- e. He has a responsibility to correct you
 - ▶ Prov 3:12 – “**For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.**”
- f. He has a responsibility to punish you
 - ▶ Heb 12:7 – “**God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?**”
- g. And your father has responsibilities your mother does not have
 - ▶ Your father must be head of the house (an awesome responsibility)
 - Must lead
 - Must make the ultimate decisions
 - Will be held responsible for his decisions and leadership – by his family, friends, brethren, and God
 - ▶ Your father must be the provider for the family
 - No choice
 - May not like his work
 - May be under a lot of pressure
 - ▶ Your father must be the primary protector and defender of home and family (and country)
 - Who do you think is going to confront the burglar?
 - ▶ He has to live with your mother” in an understanding way” (1Pet 3:7)

2. TREAT YOUR FATHER WITH LOVE

Earlier in the sermon I quoted 2Cor 12:15 where Paul declares his fatherly love for his spiritual children in the church at Corinth, but I only quoted the first half of the verse: “**And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls ...**”

- a. The second half of the verse is very sad: “**... though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.**”
- b. Sadly, that’s the way it is with too many fathers.

You don’t have to look very far in the Bible to learn how to love your father – just apply what Paul says about “love” in 1Cor 13:4-7.

- a. 1Cor 13:4-7 – “**Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.**”

Remember: Piety begins at home.

- a. 1Tim 5:3-8 – “**Honor widows who are really widows. 4 But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents;** for this is good and acceptable before God.

3. TREAT YOUR FATHER WITH RESPECT

Heb 12:9 – “Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and **we paid them respect.**”

- a. NASB: “Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and **we respected them;**
- b. ASV, KJV – “Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them **reverence...**”
- c. Thayer on *entrepo*: “to reverence a person”
 - ▶ AHD on reverence: “A feeling of profound awe and respect and often love”

Eph 6:2,3 – “**Honor your father and mother,**” which is the first commandment with promise: 3 that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

- a. What it means to “honor” your father: “to revere, to venerate”
 - ▶ “revere” – “to regard with awe, deference, and devotion”
 - ▶ “venerate” – “to regard with respect, reverence, or heartfelt deference”

So, you are to have “a feeling of profound awe and respect” for your father that causes you to treat him with “deference” and “devotion”.

4. A WORD TO MOTHERS

You have a responsibility to teach your children ... by your own attitudes and words and behavior ... to treat their father with understanding, with love, and with respect.

- a. You need to treat your husband with understanding, with love, and with respect ... and you need to insist that your children do the same.
- b. And if you are not doing that ... or, if you are saying and doing things that are contrary to that ... then you are not the mother that you ought to be.

The virtuous wife and mother whose value is far above rubies is one who “does him (her husband) good and not evil all the days of her life.”

- a. **Prov 31:11 – “The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good and not evil All the days of her life.”**
- b. The heart of your husband cannot safely trust you if, by your own attitudes and words and behavior towards your husband, you are not treating your husband with understanding and love and respect and teaching your children to do the same.

CONCLUSION

When my mother was raising me and my brother I remember her saying a number of times: “*A boy who doesn’t know how to treat his mother won’t know how to treat his wife either.*”

- a. I’m confident that if she had been blessed to have a daughter she would have adjusted that to say: “*A girl who doesn’t know how to treat her father won’t know how to treat her husband either.*”

I am absolutely certain that she was right about that.

- a. A boy or a young man who is arrogant and disrespectful towards his mother ... and is inconsiderate of her feelings ... and treats her like a second-class member of the household ... and has little or no interest in her wisdom and insights and judgment ... will show the same attitudes and behavior towards his wife, once the honeymoon is over.
- b. And a girl or young woman who is whining, pouting, complaining, and manipulative ... and is self-centered and dead set on getting her way or determined to make life miserable for everyone around her ... will show the same attitudes and behavior towards her husband once the ink is dry on the marriage certificate.
 - ▶ And her young husband, who swore that he would love her ‘til the end of time will be praying for the end of time.

REMEMBER THIS, SONS: HOW YOU TREAT YOUR MOTHER IS HOW YOU WILL TREAT YOUR WIFE.

REMEMBER THIS, DAUGHTERS: HOW YOU TREAT YOUR FATHER IS HOW YOU WILL TREAT YOUR HUSBAND.

Now, if you realize that, in all honesty, you haven't been treating your father with understanding and love and respect ... then you need to repent.

How you treat your father has a lot to say about your character ... or lack of character. If you know you've been wrong, then make a serious commitment now to change.