

THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF FATHERS FAMILY FIRST SERIES

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TEXT: Malachi 4:5 “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. 6 He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.”

INTRO: I chose “The Vital Importance of Fathers” as the first message for our new series called “Family First” because I believe that fathers are the most important person who can make or break a family.

First a disclaimer: I feel that I could have been a better father, so I am not talking about being a perfect father. I also had an absentee father, so I grew up in a less-than-ideal home. I could even blame my father, but that would be falling into the trap of not taking personal responsibility for my actions.

Having said this, I have learned the importance of the father in the home. In 47 years of walking with the Lord, having raised four adult children who love the Lord, and being married and mentored by the best mother and wife in the world, I want to share three timeless reasons why fathers are so important for the family and our society.

For years I have heard it said, “Everything rises and falls with leadership.” That is true, but I also want to say, “Everything rises and falls with fathers.”

The way we are going to change society is through godly families. The key to having a godly family is having a godly father. Godly fathers are therefore the key to the transformation of society.

I. FATHERS ARE THE KEY IN THE END-TIME REVIVAL

A. Malachi 4:5 “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. 6 He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.”

1. The prophet Elijah was a revivalist who brought revival to the Northern Kingdom of Israel as they became Baal worshipers under King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. I believe that the spirit of Jezebel is in our land like never before.
2. That revival spirit will come twice in history. First, before the Great Day of the Lord, which is the first coming of Christ. That anointing was on John the Baptist (Luke 1:17). And then before the second coming of Jesus, the Terrible Day of the Lord, when He will judge the nations (Matthew 25). That mantle is upon the church.
3. Judgment begins in the house of the Lord (1 Peter 4:17). God is giving a prophetic invitation for fathers to turn their hearts toward their children first. Then children will turn their hearts toward their fathers. God is specific: The primary responsibility is on the fathers.

4. By the grace of God, I experienced radical reconciliation with my own father, which forever impacted my family and ministry!

II. FATHERS ARE THE FOUNDATION TO THE FAMILY

A. GOD CREATED MEN TO BE FATHERS

1. **Genesis 1:27** God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. **28** God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”
2. Man is made in the image of God. **God has revealed Himself as God the Father. He made us to be fathers.**
3. All men are called to be fathers (unless they are called to be single). “Be fruitful and multiply.” “Have plenty of children and be a father to them.”

B. MAN IS TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FAMILY

1. **Man was created first, then God created woman.**
2. **Genesis 2:18** Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.”
3. This is not a chauvinistic statement. Biblically speaking, it is true, but the implication is that the man must be the support and servant to the family. It is all about servant leadership.
4. The man and woman have equal worth but different functions.
5. The analogy is that man is to be the foundation. The foundation of the house is not seen as something beautiful. It is functional. The house or the building is beautiful. So, the family is what is to shine. You can have the most beautiful building, but if the foundation is cracked, the building will be condemned. And if the foundation is really bad, the building will collapse.
6. Going up the stairs, man is to follow the woman. Going down the stairs, man is to lead the woman. Why? If the woman trips and falls, she falls on the man.
7. **Genesis 2:24** For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.
8. Marriage is initiated by the man. By initiating the marriage, he is primarily responsible for the success of the marriage.
9. When Adam sinned, God held Adam primarily responsible, not Eve.
10. **Genesis 3:9** Then the LORD God called to the *man*, and said to him, “Where are you?”
11. **Romans 5:12** Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.
12. **The first sin was rebellion and disobedience of the first man to his Father.**
13. The way God’s blessing is going to be restored is by raising up godly fathers.

C. JESUS SHOWS THE IMPORTANCE OF FATHERS WHEN HE ASKED HIS DISCIPLES TO ADDRESS GOD AS FATHER

1. Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus, God is now our Father.
2. **John 20:17** Jesus said to her, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and *your* Father, and My God and *your* God.’”

3. Fatherhood is restored through the cross.

III. THE FOUR KEYS TO BEING A GOOD FATHER

A. FATHERS NEED TO SPEND QUALITY TIME WITH THEIR CHILDREN

1. The problem with absenteeism.
2. **President Obama’s quote in 2008: “Children who grow up without a father are five times more likely to grow up in poverty and commit crime; nine times more likely to drop out of school; and 20 times more likely to end up in prison.”**
3. The word *orphan* in the Hebrew means “fatherless.”
4. Currently in the United States, roughly 45 million children under the age of 18 go to bed at night with no father present. The findings from *Father Facts* state, “In America, 24.7 million children (33 percent) lived in a biologically father-absent home in 2010. 20.3 million lived with no father (biological, adoptive, or step) in the home.”
5. Fathers are supposed to not just be there watching a TV with their child, but interacting with their child.

B. FATHERS, TEACH YOUR CHILDREN

1. God holds fathers responsible for teaching their children.
2. **Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**
3. **Proverbs 1:8 Hear, my son, your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.**
4. We are living in a time where it is imperative for parents to teach our children.

C. FATHERS, LEAD BY EXAMPLE

1. Lead with Christlike character (e.g., paying for lunch for a little league team; returning too much change at the grocery store).
2. Emphasize character over academic or athletic achievement, artistic ability, or good looks.

D. FATHERS, SHOW PLENTY OF VERBAL AND PHYSICAL AFFECTION

1. At Jesus’ water baptism, the Father expresses His verbal affection, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

CONCLUSION: I want to give a call for you to make a commitment to turn your hearts toward your home.