

Remnant Life Church
June 18, 2023
Father's Day:
Fighting the Change
I Thess 2:8-12

- But what our culture sees as a man has been changing down through the decades
 - And we can easily see the changing perception of a man in the television programs of a particular time
 - In the 50's the man was portrayed on television as Danny Thomas, Ward Cleaver, and Ozzy Nelson – steady and dependable; perhaps a little emotionally distant but certainly the anchor of the family; “Father Knows Best”
 - In the 60's it was Andy Griffith, Rob Petrie, Jed Clampett and Ben Cartwright – still with wisdom, able to flow with the circumstances, and now often with a sense of humor
 - In the 70's the image continued to change – Archie Bunker, Fred Sanford, George Jefferson, Hawkeye Pierce, and Howard Cunningham – a broad and diverse portrayal; men of emotional extremes but with more obvious flaws and perhaps not so reliable as they once were
 - And now, for the first time, the man is being removed from the life circumstances and the focus is on the woman living single or as a single mother
 - Women like Mary Tyler Moore, Shirley Partridge, Alice and Maude
 - In the 80's it was JR Ewing, Jack Tripper, Cliff Huxtable, Sam Malone, and Harry Anderson – men able to deal with their responsibilities but most with a dark, even hidden side with much deeper frailties
 - The 90's brought us Tim Allen, Frazier Crane, Jerry Seinfeld, Ray Romano, Joey, Ross, and Chandler – men were being portrayed, by and large, as being more fools and bumblers, always creating ridiculous situations for themselves to have to deal with
 - And now -2 decades into the 21st century - homosexuality, infidelity, addiction, and abuse are featured regularly as men, and with that the family unit itself, are being torn down to the place that the biblical definition of a family is becoming more and more scarce
 - This is a far cry from who and what God created a man to be.

But this did not just start in the last 50 years or so

- We did not start out well
 - **Gen 3:6** - *When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*
 - Notice what it says, “...gave some to her husband who was with her...”
 - What we must recognize is that Adam stood by silently while Eve was tempted, watched as she gave in, and then participated in the sin himself with her

- WE blew it from the very beginning, guys!
 - We did not step up to defend the righteousness of God’s directive
 - And we have been dealing with the consequences ever since
- There was a time, not all that long ago, when you could look at a person from a distance and, by their appearance only, tell if you were looking at a man
 - But the goal today is to obliterate the gender line
 - Fashions, jewelry, makeup, hair, family roles are today completely interchangeable
 - And it is to our detriment
- Now...it is right about this point that you might start to squirm and begin trying to determine if this is going to make you feel uncomfortable or not
 - The simple and undeniable truth is the genders are NOT the same
 - Man and woman were created different, and no amount of political correctness can change that
 - WATCH – different is NOT defined as better or worse
 - Different simply means not the same
 - But the culture of today is actively trying to destroy the gender line so that now little boys are being encouraged to do all those things that will enable them to embrace their ‘feminine side’ while little girls are being told that to even consider a life as a wife and mother, without pursuing and achieving a career, is to degrade themselves in the worst way possible
 - Children as young as preschool are now being encouraged to decide for themselves what gender they WANT to be
 - Gender reassignment surgeries are increasing
 - And every bit of this is shaking our fists in the face of God telling Him that He is making mistakes

READ – I Thess 2:7-12

1. Express Genuine Love (2:8a)
 - a. *We loved you so much*
 - b. In the Greek Paul’s words mean ‘to long for’
 - i. Love today, even in families, is often bought
 - ii. It happens between husbands and wives and between parents and children
 - iii. To long for something means that you WANT to express love
 - c. Many, if not most men, find that very difficult
 - d. For most it is because their own fathers did not express love and affection to them
 - i. Their dad was the Archie Bunker type who would push his son-in-law away when he tried to hug him
 - e. But this is why God issues the command “*husbands love your wives*” (Eph 5:25)
 - i. For most men it must be learned
 - ii. It does not come easily
 - f. Men the best thing you can do is to teach your children to be loving is to love their mother with open, genuine affection

- i. You might say your kids are too old but it is never too late!
- ii. You do this by modeling your love
 - 1. IOW, it is what you do not just what you say
 - 2. Jesus said to the 12 in
- g. Because the second-best thing you can do is to be affectionate with your children

Some of you may be familiar with or remember the cartoon strip, “For Better or for Worse.” Once the comic showed Dad coming into the room where his teenage daughter was sitting on the couch watching television and eating popcorn. He sits down next to her and begins watching the movie with her while helping himself to the popcorn. As he is sitting there, a little thought balloon appears over his head. He’s thinking, “I remember when she was a little girl. I held her in my arms, told her how much I loved her, and it was always so wonderful. Now look at her. She’s all grown up, and such a beautiful young lady. I wonder what she would think if I held her like I used to and told her again how much I loved her?” He finally shakes his head sadly and concludes that she would probably not like it because he would still be treating her like a little girl.

At that exact same time his daughter has a thought balloon appear as she is now thinking, “I wonder why Daddy never hugs me or tells me how much he loves me anymore?”

- h. Men – openly express your love for your family in a genuine way

2. Live a Transparent Life (2:8b)

- a. *...we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well*
- b. Notice the connection between the words “gospel” and “lives”
 - i. It is one thing to tell people so they hear the gospel
 - ii. It is another thing to actually demonstrate it in the way you live
- c. It’s a very simple question
 - i. Do your children know you are a godly man, a Christian, simply by watching the way you live?
 - ii. A step further – work? Friends? The gym? In the store?
- d. This is seen by your values, what you say and do at home, what you allow into your home, how you handle problems, stress, disappointment, and... by how much you love
- e. **John 13:34-35** - *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*
- f. But, admittedly, transparency is not always easy...

In 1986 Robert Fulghum wrote a best-selling book titled, “All I Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten.” In a follow-up book he then talks about grown children coming home again. He says that often when grown kids come back home, they will laugh and reminisce about things they got away with when they were younger, that mom and dad never found out about. He recalls that on one visit his

own children began reminiscing. His oldest son said, “Dad, when I was 14 and you and mom were gone for a while, I went out to the garage and got in the car, started it up, backed it out, drove it around the block several times, and then put it back. And you never knew it.”

Everybody laughed, and then his other son spoke up, “Another time when you and mom went to the grocery store, we kids went out in the back yard and smoked a cigar. You came home early and we thought for sure we’d been caught. But you never knew and we got away with it.” Once again everybody laughed.

Then Fulghum said to his children, “You know you didn’t know some of the things your mom and I got away with. For instance, you never knew that we took a cut off all the money grandma sent you at Christmas. You never knew that sometimes when we told you we weren’t eating leftovers, that they really were leftovers just made to look like something else.” “You never knew that when you called us from camp and you were so homesick, and we told you that we missed you, too and wished so much you were home...that wasn’t entirely accurate.”

- g. We laugh at these, maybe even wince a little bit, but a father and a husband who is willing to be transparent with his life builds trust and security
 - i. Men, fight that urge to portray the macho man who never makes a mistake
 - ii. Own your weaknesses and in that begin to gain the strength that comes from having no facades and barriers between you and your family

The first characteristic is to express genuine love

The second is to live a transparent life

3. An Unselfish Work Ethic (2:9)

- a. *Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.*
- b. Notice that the word being used here is “unselfish”, not “obsessive”
- c. Too many of our children are ignored because of the all-consuming need to succeed and achieve – (There must not be an extreme at either end of this drive to succeed!)
- d. Because a lazy man – the opposite end of the spectrum -is one who destroys the foundation of his home
 - i. *Lazy hands make for poverty...* – (Prov 10:4)
 - ii. Poverty in the Hebrew means to lack but also to impoverish oneself – IOW you’re hurting yourself
- e. Our children learn primarily in one of two ways – by example or by doing
 - i. (My story of junior high wood shop project for Dad’s writing box) – over 50 years ago
 - ii. Our work ethic should be a strong one but it should never overwhelm or overshadow our children
 - iii. They, like us, need to learn from their mistakes

4. Demonstrate Genuine Spirituality (2:10)

- a. *You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed*
 - b. Men – God commissioned you to be the spiritual heads of your home
 - c. Whether you think you are or not, whether you want to believe it or not
 - d. You will either lead your family closer to God or take them further away
 - e. That begins by demonstrating genuine spirituality – what does that mean?
 - i. NJOS – Not Just on Sunday
 - ii. Pray, read the Bible with your children, with your wife
 - iii. **Psalm 1:2** – calls us to meditate on God’s Word day and night – meditate is to dwell on
 - f. When you do this you are demonstrating a godly life-style that your children will see and have imprinted into their hearts and minds
5. A Positive Influence (2:11-12)
- a. *For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.*
 - b. This is what a godly father, a godly husband, a godly man does – creates a positive environment
 - c. *The Total Man* – Dan Benson (1977)
 - i. For every positive word spoken by dads to their kids they speak 10 negative ones
 - ii. Words like don’t, you can’t, stop that, and no come very easily – not so the ones of encouragement, comfort, and praise
 - iii. The author goes on to say that the entire personality and dynamic of relationships between fathers and their children would change if those percentages were reversed
 - d. Jesus brought correction to His disciples, but He also encouraged them
 - e. Laughter and joy encourages those around us
 - f. **Prov 17:22** – a merry heart is good like a medicine
- There is no doubt that it is not easy to be a man of God in today’s culture (or a woman of God for that matter)
 - But easy or not does not change who we are called to be
 - God designated you, men, to be the head of your home
 - The problem is that we have done it so poorly for so long that those we have been called to love, protect, and provide for cannot trust us to do it
 - Because, like Adam, we continue to abdicate our responsibility by standing by silently
 - Sadly, the world’s definition of what a real man is has infiltrated the church and perverted the true definition
 - A godly man model’s himself after Jesus Christ
 - He is humble, a servant, gentle, temperate, disciplined, confident and selfless
 - How many of those traits describe you this morning?