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“From Pastor Sheri’s Desk”

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Proverbs 23:22: *“Listen to your father, who gave you life...”*

We want to wish all fathers out there a very Happy Father’s Day! Speaking of which, I must confess that I have a bit of a pet peeve about the differences between the way people celebrate Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. Just from the financial aspect alone, according to the National Retail Federation [2019], \$25 billion was spent on Mom, whereas \$16 billion on dad. But the differences in celebration don’t end there. Go to the greeting card isle – these are downright dissimilar as well. Images of a bumbling dad who drinks beer abound, but on Mother’s Day – these types of cards are absent. So I ask, *“What has happened?”*

In the above Scripture we are told to *“Listen to your father, who gave you life...”* I believe many of the problems we have in our society today spring from the fact that we are negligent in obeying this command. Compounding this, there is an all-out assault on gender and a push to exchange days spent in celebrating Mother and Father to, ‘Happy Birthing People Day’.

So why aren’t we listening to our fathers? There are many godly men who love their families in the way Scripture commands. But how many are allowing themselves to be robbed of the wisdom and the blessings of father? Sadly too often this comes into clear focus too late – *when father is no longer around*. I’ve heard many lament, *‘If only I could have one more day with dad.’* And our nation is paying the price for it. The Word of God cautions us with several examples of the pitfalls that are ahead in the lives of families when father is disregarded.

Now one obvious fact we can conclude from this verse in Proverbs is, that the only way to listen to your father, is for him to speak. No kidding! But it’s a very important point. David was such an example of this. I know we are used to hearing harrowing stories of King David, and there are many. But when it came to fatherhood, David wasn’t exactly the greatest example in Scripture. David had an awful time of it with his kids. There were surely many reasons why he struggled in the relationships he had with his sons... *David had multiple marriages, he was frequently off fighting wars, which meant he was often absent*, but one of the most troubling pieces of evidence as to what went wrong with his approach to parenting is revealed in 1 Kings 1:6 in reference to Adonijah...

1 Kings 1:6, NKJV,

(And his father had not rebuked him at any time by saying, “Why have you done so?”...)

We see a lot of this type of parenting in our current day. It’s a parenting style of which I personally am completely unfamiliar. Trust me when I tell you that my own father frequently asked me, *‘Why have you done so?’* What this is saying about David is that he never really reprimanded him...or upset little Adonijah’s life. He didn’t attempt to thwart big acts of rebellion, or even those tendencies and habits that may have lead up to big acts of rebellion. Sadly, today we are all too familiar with David’s parenting style: Habitual Indulgence.

And as if this weren’t bad enough, the disaster deepened due to the fact that these were the king’s sons. This meant that all of their wants were supplied without any effort on their part. They were surrounded by abundance to such an extent that the notion of denying themselves was a completely foreign concept. An additional example of this is found in 2 Samuel 13 where we find another of David’s sons, Amnon – with a story worthy of an episode of the Jerry Springer show. All of these things were further complicated by the fact that these royal sons of David were surely surrounded by *yes men*, who would make a point of never crossing them or uttering any point of disagreement. Sadly, predictably, things did not end well for these sons of David.

David's sons were not listening to their father who gave them life, because their father was not using his God-given voice to speak into their lives. I recently heard about a minister who stated from the pulpit that he wasn't very good at confronting his children when they were in need of discipline. He admitted that his propensity was to reason with them. He said that his wife was better at the discipline. David too seems to have had similar tendencies toward his children. It seems he could not bear to disappoint them. His better judgments were sacrificed on the altar of feelings.

Oh how David could have learned from the example of father Abraham. Listen to what God says about him...

Genesis 18:19, KJV, *"I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment."*

David seemed to forget what Abraham realized – that he had a holy charge from Almighty God. Scripture clearly tells of our duty to *"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."* [Proverbs 22:6] When we set our hearts to follow after God and His Word *'the way they should go'* comes into focus. The Holy Spirit longs to give us guidance to know *when to be firm, when to be forgiving, when to sympathize, when to encourage, when to be patient, when to be decisive* etc.

When Manoah and his wife had their gender reveal party with the angel of the Lord, Manoah's first reaction was to pray...

Judges 13:8, NIV: *"...teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born."*

How blessed are those who can heed these words out of Proverbs, interestingly enough, from David's other son, Solomon...

Proverbs 4:3-4 NIV, *3 For I too was a son to my father...4 Then he taught me, and he said to me, "Take hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands, and you will live."*

In Bible Study we are going through the Book of Acts. What a thrilling account of the Early Church! Very early on, in Acts 4:13 we see that one of the signs that these men had been with Jesus was their **courage**. Peter and John were threatened with more than the disapproval of an out of control, politically correct culture, they were threatened with prison and much worse. But that did not deter them...

Acts 4:29, NIV, *"Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with **great boldness.**"*

When this Scripture talks about **boldness** – it denotes an "openness" or "confidence in speaking." The understanding here is diametrically opposed to "hesitancy," and to "equivocation" in declaring sentiments. Here it means that, **in spite of danger and opposition**, they avowed their doctrines without any attempt to conceal or disguise them. Put another way...

Psalms 81:10, NIV, *"I am the LORD your God...Open wide your mouth and I will fill it."*

Happy Father's Day! Keep speaking into the lives of your family...keep speaking to the culture. Your words when backed up by your life prove powerful against a society that sadly is becoming increasingly corrupt.