**“WHAT’S A DAD TO DO?”**

**Ways to Father Like God**

Pastor Bruce Henry Sunday AM, June 18, 2017

**I. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

1 John 3:1 – “**See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him**.” (NIV)

The closer we walk next to the Lord, the better fathers we can become.

* Is your heavenly Father generous with you?
* Does your heavenly Father seek to bless you?
* Is your heavenly Father patient with you when you fail?
* Does your heavenly Father forgive you when you sin?
* Is your heavenly Father faithful to you through bad times?
* Does your heavenly Father challenge you to do the right thing?
* Does your heavenly Father lovingly discipline you?

Making It Personal

* In terms of loving my children the way my heavenly Father loves me, I would rate myself a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on a scale of 1-10. What could I do today or this week to add one to that number? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Read this modified version of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, the famous biblical definition of love. Each of love’s qualities should increasingly define your parenting, so insert your name in the blanks:

“\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is patient, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is kind. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ does not envy, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ does not boast, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is not proud. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is not rude, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is not self-seeking, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is not easily angered, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ keeps no record of wrongs. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. [By God’s grace and strength], \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

* When is the last time I *told* my children that I loved them?
* When is the last time I *showed* my children that love?

**II. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

Matthew 6:31-32 - “**31Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all**.” (ESV)

As a father, I want to be sure my child’s needs are being met:

* Physically > Shelter | Nutritious Food | Water | Heat | Clothing | Education | Medicine | etc.
* Emotionally > Care | Stability | Conversation | Example | Encouragement | Direction | Exploration | etc.
* Spiritually > Prayer | Personal Vision | Preparation for Eternity | Biblical Truth | Opportunities to Grow in Christ | etc.

These examples are not meant to be overwhelming or exhaustive. As a father striving to be like the heavenly Father, consider the specific needs your children have, and commit yourself to providing for them.

Making It Personal

* In terms of providing for my children the way my heavenly Father does for me, I would rate myself a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on a scale of 1-10. What could I do today or this week to add one to that number? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* First Timothy 5:8 issues a stern warning to me who neglect providing for their families. According to that passage, a man who does not own this responsibility is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Am I spending enough time with my children to provide for their emotional needs?
* In an average week, what is the most meaningful quality time I get with my children, and what makes it meaningful?
* What are three spiritual things I have provided for my children in the past month?

1 – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2 – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3 – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* What else spiritually could I provide? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**III. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

Psalm 61:3-4 – “**3for you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy. 4Let me dwell in your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings! Selah**” (ESV)

Here are threats children face that require our protection and godly wisdom:

* Poor decision making
* Wasted time or money
* Physical threats to health
* Bullying, hatred
* Indebtedness
* Sinful habits
* Pornography, immorality
* Misaligned priorities
* Disasters, emergencies
* Enemies, abusers
* False teachings, wrong media
* Offenses by others

Making It Personal

* In terms of protecting my children the way my heavenly Father protects me, I would rate myself a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on a scale of 1-10. What could I do today or this week to add one to that number? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Given the life stage of my children (or grandchildren) right now, what are the primary threats they face? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* What are the rule/principles/boundaries/etc. I have in place today to help protect them from threats? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* How do I protect my children from making unwise decisions or choices that would somehow harm their future? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* When is the last time I had a truly heart-to-heart conversation with each of my children? Do they confide in me? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**IV. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

Joshua 24:15 – “**15But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord**.” (NIV)

Ideas for fathers desiring to lead children spiritually:

* Foster your own relationship with Jesus Christ.
* Be an example in matters of character and integrity.
* Show them what is important by your example.
* Decide how your family will serve God practically.
* Dedicate time each night to pray with your children.
* Talk about the values that define your family.
* Refuse to be angry or selfish.
* Set priority on church and spiritual education.
* Be generous; encourage your children to give also.

In reality, everything a father does is leading his children somewhere (for better or for worse). Our challenge here is to lead them *intentionally* to grow in Christ (Ephesians 6:4). After all, we do not want our children to be prepared for just the next sixty years of life, but the next sixty million!

Making It Personal

* In terms of leading my children the way my heavenly Father leads me, I would rate myself a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on a scale of 1-10. What could I do today or this week to add one to that number? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Values toward which I lead my family intentionally (check all that apply):

\_\_\_ the priority of God’s Word \_\_\_ fervent prayer

\_\_\_ sharing the gospel with others \_\_\_ financial generosity

\_\_\_ hospitality in home and heart \_\_\_ consistent church engagement

\_\_\_ a mission to live for \_\_\_ personal integrity

\_\_\_ personal gratitude \_\_\_ civic responsibilities

\_\_\_ asking forgiveness when wrong \_\_\_ spiritual conversations

\_\_\_ moral purity \_\_\_ seeking wisdom from God

\_\_\_ kindness and love \_\_\_ vision for our future

\_\_\_ compassion to the needy \_\_\_ global missions

*Circle one area that you would like to develop in order to better lead.*

* How do I involve my wife and children in making important decisions for our family?
* When is the last time I prayed about a decision in our family? Did I consult God’s Word for potential principles or solutions?

**V. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

Psalm 149:4 – “**For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory**.” (NIV)

Delighting in my children:

* Do I play with my children?
* Do is seek out opportunities to be with them?
* Do I include my children in my life choices and opportunities?
* Am I a daily encourager and cheerleader for them?
* Do my children know that I enjoy them?
* Am I striking the right balance between silly and serious?
* Does our family (and extended family) plan to have fun together?
* Do I pay attention to the details of what they love?
* Do they want more time with me, and do I offer it?

Take some time to pray for each of your children, thanking God for the reasons you delight in them.

Making It Personal

* In terms of enjoying my children the way my heavenly Father delights in my, I would rate myself a \_\_\_\_\_\_ on a scale of 1-10. What could I do today or this week to add one to that number? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* During the past year, I had these fun experiences with my children:

1 - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2 - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3 - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* On a daily basis, the part of fathering that brings me the most joy is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* The main distractions in my life today that keep me from enjoying time with my children are: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Something I would love to do in the next couple of months to show my children how much I love and enjoy them is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Take some time to pray for each of your children, thanking God for the reasons you delight in them.*