

Why We Need More Fathers and Less Government

- All right, I want you guys join me in welcoming all the dads and grandpas. Happy Father's Day. Amen. If you're new, I'm a dad, I got five kids. We got two grandsons on the way. So I get to celebrate double Father's Day this year. Super excited, really honored to have you all with us, and I've got a special topical sermon for you. More fathers, less government. And if you're offended, you're wrong. This can be a good sermon, okay? And so let me start with a bit of a story, and then we're gonna get into what we're gonna discuss in our time together. Let me show you the photo of a guy. Guy's name is Henri. He's French. I don't know if you saw this in the news. Really a very serious, very dramatic story. So in France, there were women and children that were at the park playing. A bunch of moms took their children to the park. An insane man showed up with a knife, started stabbing women and children, okay? And four young kids and two women were attacked. And there were a number of men in the park who were watching. They didn't do anything. Some men fled so that they wouldn't be harmed. One man hid behind a tree with a phone to capture it and didn't engage. None of those guys attended my church. Okay, none of them. None of them. And there was one guy named Henri, and he just happened to be in the park, and he saw this. So he got between the women and children, and the man who was seeking to harm them. And all he had was a backpack, and he started swinging it, trying to disarm the guy with a knife. And he rebuked him in Jesus' name and eventually chased him out of the park. They're calling him the backpack hero. Okay? Henri is a Christian, and he talked about how his love for Jesus and his belief in the Bible required him to get between evil and women and children. Amen? Amen? So here at our church, what we say is we build men up to bless women and children. This is a profoundly deep value. This is in the bedrock of who we are as a people and what we believe is men. Amen?

- Amen.

- And so there are two kinds of men. There are men who are passive, and there are men who are active. And men who are passive are always part of the problem because they allow evil to win. And men who are active get in the middle, knowing that evil will never stop itself. And so on Father's Day, and on this Father's Day, I would make the argument that perhaps on this Father's Day, there has never been in the history of our nation, a greater need for fathers who are active and get in harm's way to protect women and children. Culturally, physically, spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and generationally, we need men who are willing to get in the middle and willing to do whatever it takes to build up and to bless women and children. And this is really the heart of God. As men, what we can connect with is the fact that our God reveals Himself to us as a Father. And our Savior, Jesus, comes as a son. And for men, this just sings to the deepest part of who we are. And I want you to know that God's heart is a Father's heart. And if you meet our God, you will have the heart of a Father. And I wanna begin with a line that closes the Old Testament. It's one of the closing lines, and then there's 400 years of silence, and then Jesus comes. So you think about it, what would be the last thing you would say before there was a long period of silence? It would be the most important thing you would say for last. And here's what God says at the end of the Old Testament. Malachi 4:5-6, He says, "Look." So they're supposed to be anticipating and awaiting that God is going to arrive and do something. "I am

sending you the prophet Elijah." We've been in the series of Elijah. We'll finish it next week. Elijah is this man of God filled with the Spirit of God. And when the Spirit of God comes upon a man of God, they have the spirit of Elijah, the spirit of courage, the spirit of truth, the spirit of service, and humility. "I'm sending you the prophet Elijah." Ultimately, this is going to be a guy named John the Baptizer, who is Jesus' cousin, and will prepare the way for His coming. He comes in the Spirit and power of Elijah. "Before that great and dreadful day of the Lord arrives." That's the coming of Jesus. "His preaching, his preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse." Here's God's final word, followed by 400 years of silence. Men need to have a heart change so that they love their children, and children need to have a heart change so that they love their fathers. And He says, "If that doesn't happen, the whole nation is cursed." Meaning if we fail at this thing, we will fail at everything. It all begins or ends with the hearts of fathers toward their children. And what I wanna share with you is a very strong and a prophetic message. But the day in which we live, our nation is cursed because there is a lack of father's hearts. And so two things I wanna mention out of Malachi. Number one, he says that preaching will turn the hearts of men. And so the Word of God is strategically designed by God, the Holy Spirit, to do surgery on the hearts of men. And that nothing changes a man's heart like the Word of God. And when the Word of God is rightly preached, it activates men and God uses it to transform men. I wanna thank you men publicly for giving me the honor of teaching you God's Word. And I wanna thank the men in this church for being teachable men. I don't know of any church in the country that has as many men in their men's ministry percentage wise as ours because our men wanna hear the Word of God and they wanna have the Father's heart. I also wanna thank those who join us online. You may not know this, but even the talks that we put on for men are now reaching over 300,000 people on the livestream every single week. It is largely young men across the nation and the world who don't have a father, but they wanna become a father and they wanna have the Father's heart. There is an entire generation of young men who need the Father, and they want to know how to become fathers. And that comes through the preaching of God's Word and the modeling of good men. And what happens, he says, when the Word of God is preached, when preaching happens, what God does is He changes a man's heart. He takes out the old heart and the Father gives him His heart. And now, as you are loved by the Father, you love your child with the love that the father has for you. And then sensing and seeing that, your child responds with a heart of love toward you. Now, this is happening in our church, and I praise God for that. We're gonna construction some project, we're growing, we're expanding the kids' ministry. I mean, you women are having a lot of children. Thank you. We will get more water slides and we'll just get it done. That's all fine and good. But if you look outside of the church in the world, here's what I see. Curse. I see curse. And what we're doing is we're dealing with all the effects of this curse, not the root cause of the curse. And that is that men don't know God and they don't have His heart. What I wanna share with you is gonna be a little discouraging, but it's insightful because the truth is we can't deal with reality until we accept reality.

- Yeah.

- That's right.

- Here's some statistics. Since 1968, the number of children without a father has doubled to 18.4 million children. I was born in 1970. In my lifetime, roughly the number of children who do not have a father has doubled. Of a hundred countries surveyed, the United States has the highest percentage of fatherlessness, 300% higher than the global average. There's one thing we're good at. Not loving our children. So I just wanna honor God's men because you need to know that if you are a father who loves the Lord, loves your child, is active and present and trying, you are a miracle. You are a miracle. In addition, the majority of children born to women ages 30 and under are born out of wedlock with no father. Less than half of adults today grew up with a mother and father. And I'll just say this. My wife, Grace, is here. A good dad is still a bad mom. Amen? I mean, the children are alive because they have a mother. That's what I'm telling you. On my best day, I'm a terrible mother. And so you work better together like a right and a left hand. You compliment one another and you assist one another. Now, here's what's really interesting. You won't hear this in the news, but 85% of teens with a behavioral disorder have no father. 70% of adolescents in drug and alcohol treatment centers have no father. 90% of homeless and runaway children have no father. And children without a father are 900% more likely to drop out of school. You think with this that the government would say, "You know what? We need to just reset all of our priorities. We need a national organization for men. We need a men's studies degree or a minor in fathering. We should add to the public school curriculum how to love children. We should be encouraging serving children in church and in the community so that emerging generations of men have a heart for children." No, no, no. And this is where the church has a unique opportunity as the family of God to set a counter-cultural different example. And for those of you guys who are single and you're thinking, "I really someday would love to get married," I would say serve in children's ministry. Here's why. Number one, you could practice on other people's children before you have your own. It's very helpful. Number two, usually serving in children's ministry are single women who would like to be mothers. This is a strategic advantage to a man with a plan. You could be playing with a child, she could be playing with a child. She could look at you and you could look at her and you could tell her that maybe you guys could get married and make your own child. I'm just saying. You could just go from children's ministry to premarital. It's just a simple step, just something to pray about. Let me say this as well. Not only are we failing children, we're especially failing boys. And what boys are, boys are future men. When you look at a boy, it takes a lot of faith to see him as a man.

- Yeah.

- True? When you look at a little girl, you're like, "Oh, I see it." She's holding the doll, she's having a tea party. You look at the boy, you're like, "Yeah, no." No, he's a bin Laden that one, you know? He's gonna be a terrorist, you know? It takes a lot of faith to raise a son and to see a future man. And what we're especially failing are the sons. 70% of D's and F in school are earned by boys. By eighth grade, 20% of boys are proficient in writing. Only 20%. And only 24% are proficient in reading. Today, 60% of college students are female. Curiously, that is the same percentage tangentially as attending church. Church is 60% female. Here's what men are doing.

Young men spend an average of eight hours a day on leisure and screen time, pornography, and video games. That does not prepare you to be a father because you're acting like a child. And then lastly, the American Psychological Association, which is always particularly helpful with wise insight. If you didn't laugh, you're new. Said in 2019, quote, traditional masculinity. Okay, raise your hand if you have fully embraced traditional masculinity. Okay, I had a guy drive by recently. He's passed a number of church. He's like, "You have a lot of trucks and beards." Yes, we have embraced traditional masculinity in our heart. Okay?

- Yeah.

- It's like, well, the other guys are whining. Well, since we're traditional and masculine, we don't care. Traditional masculinity, and here's what they define it as. Marked by stoicism. What they mean by that is you can control your emotions. Competitiveness, which if you wanna be in sports or military or the workplace, you better have. Dominance, which the world we live in, somebody wins and somebody loses at a lot of things like business and aggression. And I think by aggression they mean moving. Is on the whole, harmful. Yeah. Yeah. And so now, what we have decided is all masculinity is toxic. And because boys mature different than girls, we need to medicate to eradicate their growing masculinity. Okay? And so what we're now seeing as well in our culture, by way of introduction, four kinds of fathers. And I want you to think about what kind of father you had. If you are a father, what kind of father you are, or if you will be a father, what kind of father you aspire to be. Or if you're like me on the precipice of being a grandfather, perhaps what kind of grandfather you want to be. Well, number one, some men are absent. Some fathers are absent. They're just not present and involved. Number two, some fathers are present, but they're passive. They don't say or do anything. Number three, some fathers are present and they're abusive. They're domineering and overbearing. And number four, some fathers are present, active, and healthy. I wanna talk about how to be a present, active, and healthy father. We're gonna talk about three things. A good father protects, provides, and pastors. That's what we're gonna talk about. A father that protects is like a father that builds a home so that the family is safe. And then he provides so that there are resources for them to flourish in the home. And then he pastors, meaning he emotionally, relationally, connects with the child to encourage and love them. It's protect, provide, and pastor. So let me start with number one. A good father protects. Nehemiah 4:9. In this instance, Nehemiah is serving as the king of the nation's representative. He's literally functioning as the national father. He's going to rebuild the house of God. He is going to welcome the people of God. He is going to provide and protect for them. He is functioning nationally in a fatherly role. And here's what he says. "We prayed to our God and we set a guard as a protection day and night." And what he's talking about here is physical and spiritual protection. He says, "We prayed," because the war is against the unseen. It's against demons and powers and principalities in the unseen realm. And even if you don't believe that, look at our culture and just ask yourself, does it not appear as if some evil force that is unseen has overtaken every area of culture and declared war on children? That's the world in which we live. It's evil. So he says, "We prayed." That is the spiritual warfare. In addition, he says, "We set a guard as protection." This is physical defense. Every good man understands these two things. You pray for your family and you're on guard to

protect your family. This is why a good dad will check all the doors in the house at night. This is why he makes sure when his kids go out, they've got a phone and they stay in touch. This is why if his daughter goes out with a boy, he runs a background check and a DNA check and arm wrestles them to make sure the boy knows who's gonna win, right? That's why you do these things. And this is why too, a good man, if he's walking with his wife or his children, he will get between them and the roads so that if someone gets hit, it is him. This is why your husband, if he's a good man, he will sit on the row at church, or he'll sit in the corner at the restaurant and he'll keep an eye on the door. And you think he's paranoid, he's just protective. In addition, we read this in 1 Peter 3:7. It speaks of husbands, but the principle would extend furthermore to fathers. "Live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel." This will be shocking. Men are physiologically, anatomically different than women. Okay? Okay? I know it's very controversial. And this is why all of the inanity with things like transgender sports is really, it's an offense to women.

- Yes.

- Because a biological male is just anatomically, physiologically built differently. Men are stronger than women. They just are.

- That's right.

- God made us different. And I'll just let you know, ladies, we're good with that.

- Yup.

- Two reasons. I like girly. How many of you guys you're like, "I like girly"? Like I don't wanna wake up and see this. I don't wanna deal with this. In addition, I have upset my wife and I'm glad she can't take me, right? I mean, it's just, practically, it has some real benefits. "As the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." What it says is, man, you're stronger. Use your strength to protect so that you're, let me say this. You want your wife and kids to not only be safe, hear me, men, but feel safe. Feel safe. There's a big difference between being safe and feeling safe. And as men, oftentimes, we don't understand how women and children feel. And sometimes that is they feel unsafe. Like if something happens, I'm not going to be able to defend or protect myself. Now, we are in Arizona, open carry states. So there are a few women who feel very comfortable. But imagine now, amen? All right, yeah, somebody just testified. All right. And so within this though, imagine though, if a woman and a child feel that when the husband and father is present, they don't feel safe because he's dangerous versus they feel very safe because he will do anything to defend and protect them. That's protection. I'll just tell you a story. I'm in a verbal process. I'll be honest with you. I preached out of state last night. I got, I drove to the hotel at 1:00 a.m. I slept a few hours, my voice is gone, so I'm just gonna verbal process a little bit. Spent a day, just flew in. I just saw something and I wanna share it with you. When I was a little boy, I grew up in a neighborhood with a lot of violent and dangerous men. I grew up where Green River Killer and

Ted Bundy and, I mean that's where I grew up. Very dangerous neighborhood. And I'll never forget when I was a little boy, under the age of 10, a friend invited me to their house. And I'll never forget their dad, I didn't know it at the time, but now in hindsight, I think he was drunk in the middle of the day and just a very loud, boorish, angry guy. Just being in the home felt very unsafe as a child. And I'll never forget that his little daughter was walking by and he just reached out his hand to get something, maybe his beer or whatever. And as soon as she saw his hand, she absolutely recoiled. The little girl did. And I remember as a little boy thinking, "He hits his daughter." This now is for her, the most dangerous place. And I left and I never came back. When my daughters were born, I asked the Lord, "Could this be the safest place?" Could this be the, that when my daughters see my hand, they don't run from it, but they run to it.

- Yeah.

- Okay? So when my girls were little, I just saw this with my youngest daughter as I was talking. I'll never forget. One time I was just doing something. My hand was down there and she walked up and she grabbed my hand and she put it on her face and she looked at me. And we had this little routine where she'd be around and I'd put down my hand and she'd always just come lay her head on my, I was like, "I want this to be the safest place on earth."

- [Audience Member] Amen.

- Not the most dangerous place, the safest place. But if anybody comes to hurt you, this becomes a dangerous place.

- [Audience Member] Yeah.

- To love and protect you. Children without a father are 200% more likely to be neglected or abused, especially girls. The statistics for trauma and abuse and neglect are at an old time high because fatherhood is at an old time low. In addition, by age 30, males who grew up without a father are 200% more likely to be in prison. A father protects you from them. A father protects you from you. Part of the reason that a father is in a home is especially with the boys to have authority over them so that they learn to submit to and respect authority before they grow up and commit crimes and have to pay for them with prison sentences. In addition, here's the summary. For the first time ever, most 18 to 34 year olds are living with their mother. These are men, or I should say boys who can shave. Young men are not launching, they are languishing. They are living with their mother, and the least likely generation ever to be seeking employment, marriage, or planning to launch in response to a governmental COVID crisis. Air quote. On crisis. So what we saw during COVID was the government replaced fathers. And the government said, all of you, younger people, especially younger men, don't go to work, don't leave the house, go home, move back in with your mother. You don't have a father, otherwise, he would tell you you can't move back in. And then the government will just send you money and you should just stay on social media and be triggered by fear and anxiety and anger. So there's a whole generation that was told, just be a good boy and sit on the couch. And when

you're 30, that's a problem. And that's where we find ourselves. This is the generation that is waiting longest to marry. The average guy is over 30 at first marriage if he ever marries. We are now looking at an entire generation that should be stepping into manhood and fatherhood, and they are nowhere near ready. They're still being over-mothered and the government has replaced their father. It's a crisis. And I saw this firsthand growing up. I'll share a little story from my background. So I was the oldest of five kids and my dad, he was a protector of our family and a provider for our family. But, and I love my dad. My dad's watching and Happy Father's Day, pops. I know he reads his Bible every day and prays for his kids and his grandkids. And I love my dad and I look forward to seeing him this summer, but when I grew up in that rough neighborhood, there was a house next to us that had a few sons, and then there was a house next to them that had a few sons. Three houses in a row. And I had two brothers. Now, I grew up, got married, launched, as did my brothers, and the house next to me, one of the two sons died at a young age. In the house next to them, one of the two sons died before he ever moved out of his father's house. Three houses next to each other, these are the boys that I played with growing up. There was a funeral for two of those houses. And guess what? My house was the only one with a father. They did not have a father and they died in their 20s, and one never made it out of his mother's home. A good father protects. Number two, a good father provides. Genesis two. If you're a young man, just hold your chair. This is gonna trigger you. It's about work. Genesis 2:15, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden," to do what?

- Work.

- Work. This is pre-curse, pre-fall. God didn't put him in the garden to vote for a politician who would attack someone who went to work. God put him in the garden to work. It is a man's duty to work. 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12, it should be the memory verse for the entire generation. "We give you this command. If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat." We would call that incentive. Like, "I'm very hungry." "You need a job." "No, I need food." "No, you need a job." There's this magical process where if you get a job, they give you money and then you get food. All the fathers said?

- Amen.

- Amen. You wanna get them off the payroll. That's how I'm trying to help, brother. All right. "For we hear that some among you walk in idleness." You're not doing anything. "Not busy at work, but busy bodies." Online, social media, video games, wasting time. "Now, such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living." What he's saying is, if you are an adult, particularly a man, you need to work a full-time job at the very least. And what this means is two things. There should be no such thing as a universal basic income. Nobody else should pay for you to spend their money, okay? In addition, there should not be a socialistic redistribution of wealth. If certain people go to work and certain people don't wanna go to work, then voting for people to take the money from the people that are going to work is called stealing.

- Yes.

- That's right.

- It's called stealing. 1 Timothy 5:8, I read this verse, we put it on the internet, and it went viral on TikTok. Not because I was dancing with it, just 'cause I read the verse. Okay? There was a whole generation of young men who were like, "Oh my gosh, the Bible says to work." And they were shocked. And they weren't at work, so they had time to watch the video clip. So I'll just read it to you. Here's the triggering verse. "But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and he is worse than an unbeliever."

- [Audience Member] Amen.

- Any husband and father who is able-bodied and doesn't work is more detestable in the sight of God than an unbeliever who has rejected His Son, Jesus Christ. Those are strong words. Those are strong words. And part of it is this. God made us to work and work is part of our worship. Think of the Lord Jesus. He comes to the earth. The first 30 years, 90% of His life, He's working a job. God worked a job and paid His taxes. And so historically, Protestant Christians have seen work as worship. There was a German sociologist named Max Weber. He coined the phrase the Protestant work ethic. And he said it was the cause of the American dream that if you will work, you can then chase your dreams and make generational wealth possible. And so Protestants started working hard as worship unto the Lord, six days a week, and Sabbathing. In addition, Protestant parents started giving their children chores to teach them how to work. And Protestant workers did not see a distinction between sacred work and secular work because Jesus is Lord overall. So whatever you're doing unto the Lord is sacred. You could be a mechanic, you can be an electrician, you can be an architect, you can be an accountant, you can be a mom, you could be a dad. That work is unto the Lord, it's all sacred. Here's where we find ourselves today. 81% of single parents are women. If you're a single mother, we love you, we honor you. You're doing at least two full-time jobs. Children without a father, this is a mind melt, are 500% more likely to be in poverty. 500%. We're not talking about a good dad, we're not talking about a dad who's reading the Bible or filled with the spirit. We're just talking about a dad who's breathing. If he can fog a mirror, he makes a difference. I told you I was up late and early. So what about young men that are entering into those responsible years of fatherhood and marriage? A record 7 million men ages 25 to 34 are not working or looking for work. This is the highest percentage of able-bodied men in our nation's history who are not working or looking for work. We have created a category for them. NILF, not in labor force. Another way to say it is in mom's basement 'cause that's where they are. And now, I mean here's the deal guys. I'm gonna poke and prod because you see it everywhere you go. I'm so tired of going, like I'll go to a store and I'll tell you what I see every single time. A very out of shape guy in his 20s still wearing his pajamas or gym shorts and a mask. I don't know if he's a painter or what, I don't know what. And he's with his mother who drove him to the store and she is taking him shopping for

groceries or products, and he's about the same age as Jesus when He atoned for the sin of the world. So this guy saves the world, and this guy can't drive.

- [Audience Member] Yeah.

- I mean it's, I just feel like saying this, so I'm gonna say it. If you are a mother, you are likely prone to over mother a man. This is where a father needs to kick in. And if a father isn't around, then an uncle, or a grandfather, a pastor, a spiritual father needs to kick in because she's so, mom is so used to babying her little boy. It's like now, he's six foot tall, he has a beard, and his sippy cup should not be filled with beer. It's time to move on. And that's where true or false, a dad steps up and is like, "Honey, look. Babe, babe, seriously?" Like stop cutting the crust off his sandwich. Like he's not gonna choke. He's all right. All right, we just lost every young man on the internet. Right? 'Cause their mom cut their internet. So here's another one. This is the best Father's Day sermon ever, by the way. All right, 19% of males ages 25 to 29 without a biological father are idle. They're not in school or work. That's one in five young men is doing nothing. That's just, that's horrifying. Let me just speak to old men, but especially young men. Number one, you cannot be free unless you pay your own bills. If you are dependent on the government, you are not free.

- That's right.

- You are not free. Number two, unless men go to work, you run out of people to tax to pay for all the men who don't go to work.

- [Audience Member] That's right.

- See, we believe in Jesus and math. So if there are men that are not working, but are taking money from men who were working, eventually there's not enough money 'cause there's not enough men working. We call that America. We have pushed our national debt. We now owe a hundred thousand dollars in national debt roughly for every American. We owe \$250,000 for every tax-paying American. And the answer just seems to be more and more and more. I'm telling you that reality is like gravity and you have to deal with it whether or not you believe in it. In addition, what we now have, and let me say this too, I'm gonna point this out. You can look historically, just even in my lifetime. I was born in 1970. Fathers and government are literally like a scale. Okay? So when when I was born in 1970, there was less government and government debt because there were more fathers. As we've had less fathers, guess what we have? More debt and more government. And now we are at a place that we have far too many fathers. I'll say it again. We have far too few fathers. And as a result, we have far too much government.

- [Audience Member] Yeah.

- And those who grow up without a father and only knowing the government think that the answer is more government and the answer is more fathers and less government.

- Today, a younger generation views being a victim as their job description and being an activist as their work.

- Yup.

- Yup.

- And this is a cultural crisis.

- [Audience Member] Yes.

- I'll tell you a little bit about my dad. My dad got married young, which I generally encourage if you're ready for it. And my dad was a construction worker, he was a drywaller. My dad literally went to work and broke his back feeding our family. That was my dad. My dad, when I was little, he would work construction, hanging sheet rock, and then on the weekends he would take side jobs to feed our family. Many days my dad would come home covered in sheet rock dust and he would just lay on the floor to stretch out 'cause his back was hurting so bad. When times got hard, my dad would get in his truck and he would drive to another city or state to work. And he would sleep on the sheet rock and send the money to me and my mother. I was raised by a man who knew how to work and he raised us to work. There's something particularly dignified about working. And for a man, there is something that strengthens him. Too many men are too soft. Too many men are too weak. Too many men have been over mothered and governmentally dependent and have not been rightly fathered. And so if you're here and you're a father, you're more important than you think you are. And if you're here and you aspire to be a father, we're here to help you. The older men in this church have a father's heart to pull up the next generation of young men. That's our heart. In addition, if you are here and you have not had a good father, you can find a spiritual father. Number three, a good father pastors. He protects, he provides, he pastors. Ephesians 6:1-4, "Children obey your parents in the Lord," mothers and fathers, "for this is right." He quotes the 10 commandments. "Honor your father and your mother." It's important to teach kids that because they like to do the divide and conquer strategy, and honor mother or father. Honor mother and father. He says, "This is the first commandment with a promise that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." Here's the big idea. If you obey your mother and father, you live longer and you make more and it goes better. We're seeing that today. Every generation is encouraged to rebel and every generation is more mentally and emotionally broken, triggered, and struggling.

- [Audience Member] Yes.

- In addition, fathers, this is the word to the men. Do not what? Provoke. Don't call them names, don't bully them, don't intimidate them, don't dial them up, don't threaten them, don't be harsh with them. Instead, don't provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Meaning as a father, all of our discipline and instruction must be absent

anger. Instruction and correction are not a problem. Anger undermines instruction and correction. Which means as a man, you've gotta cool down and calm down before you engage your child. I always like to say, you need to connect before you correct. And sometimes before you talk to your child, you need to go talk to your father and get your heart right so that you're not angry with your child. But what he's saying is this. That the ultimate responsibility for the raising of a child is one person. Who is it? It's the father. So what about the mother? The father is the head of the household. The father and mother are jointly responsible for the raising of the child. Hence the text says, "Honor your mother and father." They're leading. But then He says, "Fathers, you go first." You be the first to initiate relationship, prayer, Bible study, church attendance, worship. Too oftentimes what men think is it's the job of the mother to raise the children, and it's the job of the school to educate the children, and it's the job of the church to save the children. No, no, no. That's your job. Now, the mother can help you and the school can help you and the church can help you, but you need to be the leader.

- [Audience Member] Yes.

- And I just wanna say, not in a flattering way, but in an earnest way. I am so proud of the men of this church.

- [Audience Member] Yes.

- They are some of the best active fathers I've ever seen in my entire life. And what we are seeing is men owning their God-given, not just responsibility, but joy to know and to raise another human being. Because when you're a boy, someone takes care of you. When you're a young man, you take care of yourself. When you're a grown man, you take care of your family. And there's something particularly dignifying when a man takes on that masculine responsibility. And so what he's talking about here is the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Not to get super technical, but the original word is *paideia*. And in the original text, it means the full human flourishing and the raising of a human being. The dad's, okay, are they physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, financially ready to launch relationally into the next season of life? And I wanna honor you men who are in church because that is very unusual, but it's very important. And what's happened historically, just go down a rabbit trail 'cause I'm kind running out of time, but let me just say this. Men are not in church and that's why they're bad fathers. If I could just be very direct, I haven't been yet, so let me do that now. There is no other place for a man to be taught how to be a husband and father other than the church. They say nothing in your education, there is no degree at school, there is nothing in the woke agenda of politics or entertainment that would in any way encourage a man to be a husband and father or educate him on how to accomplish those objectives. The church is the only place left that is for marriage, children, men, women, family. That's all we've got. But thanks be to God, that's all we need.

- Amen.

- That's all we need. Let me just jump down. I'll wrap it up. According to data collected by

promise keepers in the Baptist Press, just shared this with you. If the wife attends church regularly, but the father does not, there's a 2% chance that the children will become regular attenders of a church as adults. What's amazing is the father is the head. The question is not is the husband and father the head? The question is, is he a good head or a bad head? The question is not is he the head? Number two, if a father attends church irregularly, there's a 50 to 67% chance that the children will attend church with some regularity as adults. Number three, if the father attends church regularly, there's a 67 to 75% chance that the children will regularly attend church as adults whether or not the mother attends. I don't say this to discourage, diminish, demean any mothers, but if the father leads, the children tend to follow, especially the sons. And I will ask you men this. Do you want your sons to be like you? And do you want your daughters to marry someone like you? And the church that you choose sets an example of what healthy marriage and family looks like. And if you worship, your children will worship. If you pray, your children will pray. If you read the Word of God, your children will read the Word of God. Because God has instinctively hardwired the children to follow the mother and the father, but particularly the father. And so I just wanna honor the men. We had a pastor visiting recently and he said, "I've never seen a church where the men sing like your church." I said, oh, you should come to Real Men. That's level up varsity dudes. Our guys sing. We worship, we pray. During service, there is communion in the back. We encourage you if you're married or you're single, you can go take communion. But especially if you're married, pray over your wife. If you have children, pray over your children because ultimately, husband, father, let me say this plainly. Your family has a pastor. That's you. Now I pastor the big flock, you pastor the little flock. The Word of God can't just be open in this house, but in your house. Prayer doesn't happen just in this house, but your house. Worship doesn't happen just in this house, but at your house. And our goal as an extended family is to set an example so that you will then go do in your house what we're doing in God's house. How many of you men, let me just hear from the men. How many of you men, just by show of applause, this is your heart to love women and children and that you would be the pastor of your family? Amen. I wanna honor that. I wanna encourage that. I wanna affirm that. I wanna celebrate that, and I want to multiply that by the grace of God. I'll close with this. How many of you men are single? Let me speak to the single men. Okay, well, single men, let me tell you this. Millennial men ages, born from 1981 to 1996, you are the largest generation in the history of America. 55% of your generation are having children out of wedlock before marriage. 55%. So what I wanna give you is something called the success sequence. I've stated it before. Here's my encouragement and exhortation, my fatherly exhortation. Number one, here's the success sequence. Number one, graduate from high school.

- [Audience Member] Yeah.

- Number two, work a full-time job. Not some part-time Joe job, a real job. Marry a woman. Right? Marry a woman. Okay? I know, we're getting crazy. I know. And then have children. That's the success sequence. Graduate, get a job, marry a woman, have kids. Statistically, you are going to be near 0% possibility of living in poverty if you do those four things in order. The order is really important. And if you get it out of order, your life looks like disorder.

- Yeah.

- Two things I would say as well to the single men. Number one, don't overlook the single mothers. As you are hoping to marry, there may be a woman that a bad guy failed in his duties or whatever the case may be, she may have learned from that, she may have grown from that. Jesus' mother was a single mother. He didn't have an earthly father. Joseph adopted Him. And I will tell you this. Joseph got a really good son and a pretty great wife out of the deal. Don't overlook the single mothers. Number two, if you're a single man, don't wait until your 30s to get married, get ready as soon as possible. The sooner you start, the further ahead you are. This is what I've told my three sons and my son-in-law. Grow up, take on responsibility, get married. You'll have a 10-year head start. You'll have a, this is the good news. Everyone else is on the couch vaping. If you just get up, put pants on, leave the house and try, you're a winner. Number two, for you young men who are married, but don't yet have children, it's the greatest thing you can do. And I would tell you this. Climate change is stupid. And there's a whole generation, I've read this book, there's a planet, Jesus comes back, and He burns it. I'm just, I've read the book.

- [Audience Member] Yeah.

- And so many young men are like, "I'm not having children 'cause I'm saving the planet." Because you're an infant. Yes.

- And you don't wanna take on masculine fatherly responsibilities. It's the hardest thing you can do. It's the greatest thing you can do. I love with all my heart being a dad. I love it. I loved it when they were little, I loved it in the teen years, now they're launching, we've got our third wedding this summer. I love it with all my heart. Number four, to fathers, I would tell you simply this. Statistically, you are more important than you think, and you're probably doing better than you think. And the best way you can do better, I'll give you the dangerous question that just came to mind. Tell your child you love them, ask them how you have failed them, apologize to them, and ask them how you could be a better father. And even if you don't agree, listen and pray and see what the father says. Because it's not a father that gets it right that the children love and trust. It's the father who wants to get it right and is trying his best that the children love and trust.

- [Audience Member] Yup.

- I'm just gonna close there. We'll bring the band up in worship. I have a lot more to say, but Happy Father's Day. I'll close with the Words of Jesus as the band comes up. John 14:6, Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, but through me." The point is this. That God is a Father and we have all sinned against Him. So He sent our big brother, Jesus. And as we hear this, we're probably all convicted of some sin in our life. Like I could have done that better. I should have done that different. Well, the good news is that Jesus lived the life we've not lived, that He's died the death we should have died, that He's risen to

take away who we were, and to give us a new future as adoptive children of God. And if you're convicted of any sin, I just want you to know that Jesus forgives and He can connect you to the Father. And the Father is going to father you to get the best version of you in the future.

- [Audience Member] Yes.

- In addition, if you have a father that has failed you and you have a bit of a father wound, I want you to forgive them and just leave them in the hands of Jesus and the Father and you go on with Jesus and the Father.

- [Audience Member] Yes.

- And I just wanna pray a fatherly blessing over the husbands and fathers and grandfathers. So if you're a father or grandfather, would you just raise your hand? Just raise your hand. Father God, I pray a special, unique downpouring of Holy Spirit blessing on these fathers and fathers-to-be and grandfathers and grandfathers-to-be. God, we pray against the enemy of servants, their works, and effects. We pray against the curse in our culture where men don't have the father's heart, and as a result, women and children are paying a steep price. Lord, in your house, would your sons have your heart? Lord God, I thank you for the heart of the men and the hearts of the men in this church. They're not perfect, but they're new and they're getting better. God, I thank you that there are some fantastic dads and granddads in this house. And I pray, Lord, for generations of lives and legacies. And I pray that the children that grow up under the leadership and headship of these men would feel blessed and not cursed. In Jesus' name, amen. Happy Father's Day.