

Sermon Series: *Father's Day*



## Honor Your Father

**(Ephesians 6:1-4 ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup> "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." <sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

## Introduction

I love this picture (above). It's a father delighting in his son and a son delighting in his father. Today is Father's Day and that's what this day is all about—delighting in your father. Father's Day is a day specifically set aside to honor our fathers and this is a biblical for God commands it. It is God's will that you honor your mother and father. This is the fifth of the Ten Commandments. We honored mother's on Mother's Day and today we want to honor fathers.

This morning I want to obey this command by honoring my father by sharing a few things that I learned from him. I pray that as I share about my father that you will be thinking about your own father. My prayer is that this will help you honor your father.

Secondly, I pray that God will use this time to encourage the fathers among us to take seriously this role that God has given us. And I also pray that God would begin to equip and prepare the future fathers who sit among us. May God put within you a desire to pay attention to the good and godly fathers in your life so that you will take note of how they live so that you will one day put into practice those same good and godly principles that will allow you to be a good and godly father.

Lastly, I want you to be able to praise God—the almighty Creator of the universe—because we are able to relate to him as “father.” This truth we learned from Jesus. Jesus' favorite word to refer to God was “father.” In the Gospel of Matthew he referred to God as Father over 40 times and he used the term over 75 times in the Gospel of John. Jesus taught us to think of God, not as a distant, impersonal force that controls the universe, but as a close, personal father who is concerned about every detail and ever area of our lives. God is not a force who controls us, but rather a father who loves us. I pray you will worship him because of this fact.

## Honor Your Father

Let's look again at Paul's instruction.

### **(Ephesians 6:1-3 ESV)**

*<sup>1</sup> Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup> “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”*

When we are young, the first and most obvious way we honor our father is by obeying him. To all of you children (if there are any left in the room who are not downstairs for children's church), this is God's will for you, that you obey your father. That's the first and easiest way to honor your father—by obeying him.

However, as we get older the way we honor our fathers changes. For example, this past Thursday at 1:30 a.m. (June 16) was the sixth anniversary of the death of my father. The only

way I can honor him today is by honoring his memory. My father taught me a few things that helped shape me, which are worth remembering and sharing.

1. **Work is good and hard work is better.** Dad frequently told me once, "If you work hard, you'll eat well and sleep well." He was right. Hard workers will not go hungry. If you're a hard worker, then you'll find someone who will hire you. My dad was very hard worker. He was pipe-fitter and he worked with his hands<sup>1</sup> all his life. He worked hard at his job and at home. He worked hard and we always had food and at the end of the day, he slept very well at night.

(Ecclesiastes 9:10 ESV) <sup>10</sup> *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.*

(Ecclesiastes 5:12 ESV) <sup>12</sup> *Sweet is the sleep of a laborer...*

(Proverbs 12:27 ESV) <sup>27</sup> *Whoever is slothful will not roast his game, but the diligent man will get precious wealth.*

Lazy people won't eat and Paul taught that they ought not to eat.

(2 Thessalonians 3:10 ESV) <sup>10</sup> *For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.*

2. **It's good to laugh.** My dad was a big joker. He was always telling jokes. He enjoyed making people laugh. He was good at it. He was the life of the party. I remember so many Sunday's going out to eat with other family's after church and sometimes laughing until we cried.

(Proverbs 17:22 ESV) <sup>22</sup> *A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.*

There were no dry bones in our house. I remember him with a smile on his face. That's him on the left (picture).

My dad was always pulling some gag or tricking us. Once he made big deal about making this special table saw which he was modifying for some obscure purpose he wasn't clear about.



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<sup>1</sup> He had the most powerful hands I've ever shook.

Mom was scared to death he was going to hurt himself. So one night he bought a container of fake blood and soaked his hand in it and then ripped up his shirt and came screaming into the house. We all freaked out and my mom almost fainted and then he burst out laughing like it was the funniest thing in the world. Mom missed him by an inch with the cast iron skillet she had been washing.

I also learned it's *not* good to laugh at the expense of others. Laughter must be tempered and no laughter is worth bringing harm or belittling someone else. Fathers, let laughter live in your home, but the right kind of laughter, not belittling, biting laughter.

3. **God gives grace to the humble.** My father was acutely aware of his own sinfulness and thus he knew that God owed him nothing but judgment and condemnation. And yet he praised God often for being gracious to him. Near his death he told me,

"I never dreamed I would live long enough to see retirement. After all the sinful things I've done, I never thought the Lord would let me live this long. I thought I'd get killed in a knife fight before I made it to 30. But really I only ever had one prayer, and that was that he'd let me live long enough to see you boys grow up be self-sufficient. And the Lord answered that prayer and he even gave me tenfold more. He not only let me see you grow up, but he let me see your kids too! There's nothing more I could ask for. He has given me far more than I deserve."

*(James 4:6-7 ESV) 6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God.*

If you want to enjoy God's grace, then you must humble yourself and let go of all pride. *"God opposes the proud, but he gives grace to the humble."*

4. **Unbridled lust will destroy your life.** My dad couldn't control his sexual desires, which led to adultery and eventual destruction of his 33 year long marriage to my mother and to the loss of nearly everything he'd worked for.

In the front of the book he wrote (*A Father's Legacy*) recording the events of his life, there's a question, "What was your favorite sports team?" He answered by writing, "Dallas Cowboys... cheer leaders."

*(1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 ESV) 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.*

The sexual immorality that God wills we abstain from is any sexual activity outside the

sexual relationship within the covenant bond of marriage between one man and one woman. Heterosexual, monogamous sex is the only that God blesses.

We live in a world that tells us God doesn't care about your sex life. "Pornography is fine, adultery, is fine, anything is fine so long as there is consent. God wants you to be happy so do whatever feels good." That's not the message that's found in the Bible. God does want you to be happy, but the deepest and longest happiness comes only through holiness (i.e. sanctification), not sinfulness.

The Bible teaches us that when sin entered the world it affected **all** of us, meaning every one of us and every part of us. There is no part of the human nature that has not been corrupted by sin. Sin has worked its way through the whole of humanity and the whole of our being. Every desire I have has been corrupted by my sinful nature. So any desire I have can be sinful. I desire food, but that can be sinful when I desire more than I need. I desire money, but that desire can be sinful when I love money more than I love God. I desire sex, but that desire can be sinful when it is directed to anyone other than my wife.

*(1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 ESV) <sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup> that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, <sup>5</sup> not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.*

It is God's will that we be holy, that's what 'sanctification' means. It is not God's will that we indulge immoral sexual desires, it is God's will that we learn how to control our sexual desires and all other bodily desires. "It is God's will that each one of us know how to control your own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like those who do not know God." So Paul says,

*(2 Timothy 2:22 ESV) <sup>22</sup> So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*

My father was not good at fleeing sinful passions and I lived through the pain that resulted. Fathers, for the sake of your wives, your children, and Jesus, who poured out his blood to make you holy, flee sinful passions and pursue holiness, righteousness, faith, love, and purity. Holiness and happiness are not antonyms, but synonyms. God blesses holiness which results in happiness, this is why God adds a promise to this commandment to honor your father.

## That It May Go Well With You

Paul reminds us that the fifth commandment, the commandment to honor your father, is "**the first commandment with a promise.**"

### Ephesians 6:2-3 (ESV)

<sup>2</sup> *"Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise),<sup>3</sup>  
"that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."*

God wants his children to be blessed and happy and so he adds to the commandment to honor your father the inducement of a promise that things *"will go well with you and your days will be long in the land."* God is not trying to keep us from having fun. He's trying to help us have fun for all of eternity. He wants things to go well for you, but they won't if you fail to pursue holiness and if you fail to honor your father. These are both part of God's good will for his children.

## Fathers, Instruct Your Children

Lastly, fathers, teach these things to your children.

### Ephesians 6:4 (ESV)

*"...bring up children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."*

Fathers, you are to instruct your children in the ways of the Lord. Dads, God expects you to teach your children how to obey the Lord and how to do the things that please him. Fathers, if you fail to teach your children the truth about God, then know for certain that someone will teach them what is false about God.

For example, some people are willing to teach their children that God is pleased when unbelievers are murdered. Omar Mateen had been taught this. He assumed that murdering 49 people in the Pulse nightclub was pleasing to God.

In one statement he posted to FaceBook during the shooting, after pledging his allegiance to the Islamic State, he wrote, "May allah accept me."<sup>2</sup> "Allah" is the arabic word for 'God.' He had been taught that murdering unbelievers would cause a person to be accepted by God. It's doesn't. God forbids murder—all murder, even murder supposedly committed in the name of religion. Mateen had been deceived. He'd been lied to.

### (Genesis 9:6 ESV)

<sup>6</sup> *"Whoever sheds the blood of man,  
by man shall his blood be shed,  
for God made man in his own image."*

All human beings are created in the image of God. Murdering another human being is an attack upon the very image of God himself and the image-bearing people whom he has

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<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/06/16/482339322/senator-says-orlando-shooter-posted-pro-isis-messages-on-facebook> accessed June 17, 2016.

created. God was not and is not pleased with Omar Mateen's murderous rampage Orlando. Forty-nine people, created in the image of God, were murdered Sunday morning and for that we should grieve and weep.

Omar Mateen was not obeying, honoring, or doing the will of God the Father. He was doing the will of his father, the devil. Jesus taught that the devil was "*a murderer from the beginning.*"<sup>3</sup> This means that from the beginning of this world the devil has been plotting and committing murder. All murder originates from Satan and so does the hate that fuels it. God the Father never commands murder, but the devil seeks it continually because he is a murderer.

Jesus tells us that Satan comes "*to kill, steal, and destroy.*"<sup>4</sup> That's exactly what happened in Orlando last Sunday morning and it was all the work of Satan—the hate, killing, murdering, stealing life, and destroying hope.

Fathers, teach your children the truth about God. Read the Bible and help your children understand God's word (no matter how old you or they are). God never condones murder, but always condemns it. Instruct your children in the ways of the Lord. If you don't teach them the truth about God, someone will certainly teach them a lie about God. The truth about is that God is love.

**(1 John 4:9-10 ESV)**

*<sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

God is love and he loved us so much that he sent Jesus to be the propitiation for our sins. Propitiation means that Jesus, by dying, has taken away God's just wrath against sinners who will trust in him. We are all sinners therefore all who would enjoy God's wrath being removed, must come to Jesus in faith, by trusting in his death and resurrection and asking him for forgiveness.

God is love, but he does not love sin. God hates sin. Sin is what separates us from God. God is love and so he made a way for our sin to be removed. Sin is only taken away when we come to Jesus and ask him to forgive us of our sin.

Sin is not removed by redefining it. My lust doesn't stop being a sin just because I choose to call it "my natural propensity to ponder the female form." Adultery doesn't stop being a sin because I choose to call it an "extra marital affair." Drunkenness doesn't stop being a sin because we choose to call it a "compulsive engagement in rewarding stimuli, despite adverse

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<sup>3</sup> Jn. 8:43-44.

<sup>4</sup> Jn 10:10.

consequences.” Murder doesn’t stop being a sin because we call it jihad. God has defined, in the Bible, what is and is not a sin and it is unloving to call it anything else.

## Conclusion

The God who created the world and everything and everyone in it is a *God of love who hates sin*. He loved us so much that he sent Jesus to endure God’s hatred of sin so that we wouldn’t have to. This is why Jesus had to die. Jesus had to die because God hates sin. By his death, Jesus has removed, for all those who will trust in him, God’s just hatred of sin and his just judgment against all sinners. Sin is what separates us from God’s family. By surrounding your life to Jesus, God adopts you into his family and becomes your Father.

God gives us earthly fathers so that we will be able to have a hint at how good our heavenly father is. Our earthly fathers are imperfect reflections of a perfect heavenly father. When God gave the command to honor your father, he wasn’t blind to the fact that all father’s would fail in some ways. Yet he gave the command anyway.

I suspect there’s something good in your father no matter how bad you think he is or was. Every father will fall short at some point. But God the Father will never fall short. He will never fail you or forsake you.

Fathers, teach your children the truth about God. Instruct your children in the ways of the Lord. Teach them that the only way to have their sins forgiven is through faith in Jesus. Teach your children to love God’s word. And you future fathers among us, take note of the men around you who are good fathers and make it your ambition to be a good father as well.

Honor your earthly father and praise your heavenly Father for he is good father.