

Husbands and Fathers - Part 4

by Derek Prince

Derek Prince emphasizes the critical role of fathers in leading their families spiritually and the importance of their responsibilities as priests, prophets, and kings.

Duration: 28:26

Scripture: Genesis 18:17-19, Deuteronomy 11:18, Acts 16:31, Ephesians 6:4, 1 Timothy 3:4-5

Topics: "Family Leadership", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the role of fathers as spiritual leaders in their families, drawing insights from the story of Paul and the jailer in Philippi, the responsibilities of fathers as priests, prophets, and kings in their households, and the importance of fulfilling the duty of teaching and guiding their children in the ways of the Lord. It highlights the need for fathers to acknowledge their responsibility, humble themselves before God, trust in His grace, be diligent in their role, and prioritize their family above all else.

Transcript

Derek Prince Ministries Proclaiming the inspired word of God around the world. Derek Prince is an internationally recognized Bible teacher and author. Through books, audios, videos, and radio broadcasts, Derek seeks to reach the unreached and teach the untaught.

In over 50 years of ministry, Derek has reached over 100 nations in more than 50 languages. And now, Derek Prince. And then we look on in the ministry of Paul.

The famous incident in Philippi where the jail was shaken with an earthquake and all the prisoners were set free. The jailer was about to kill himself because he was answerable for his life, for the lives of the prisoners. If they escaped, his life had to answer for it.

But do you remember Paul said, Don't kill yourself, we're all here. And so he cried out that age-old question, What must I do to be saved? And here's the New Testament answer. Verse 31 of Acts 16.

So they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Now a lot of evangelicals stop there. But that's not the end of the verse.

You will be saved, you and your household, your family. What a pity to cut off those last few words. Because a father has the privilege to believe for the salvation of his family.

Because of the responsibilities that he has, God also gives him the authority. See, God never gives responsibility without authority. Nor does He give authority without responsibility.

So because of the tremendous responsibilities that God has placed upon a father, He gives him the authority to believe for his household. That's what Joshua said. He said, As for me and my house, what did he say? We will serve the Lord.

How did he know his house will serve the Lord? Because he had the authority to believe for them. Now I was dealing with a dear lady once who came to me all troubled about her unsaved family. I said in a comforting way, Well Acts 16, 31, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved in your family.

She went away and the Holy Spirit very gently chided me. He said, You misapplied that Scripture. It was not spoken to a woman.

It was spoken to a man who was the head of his house. He had the right to believe for his house. Now you ladies will be up in arms maybe and say, Well what about us? Don't go to that Scripture because it's on a basis.

You want a real good pattern, if you humble yourself, it's Rahab the harlot. She, oh how marvelous, she believed for her whole household. But it was not on the basis of her position in the family.

You understand? It was on the basis of faith which God gave her. So there we are. That's the father's responsibility as priest.

Let's look at the father's responsibility as prophet. You can put it this way. As priest he represents his family to God.

As prophet he represents God to his family. And that again is the special, unique privilege of every father. Let's look in Ephesians 6 verse 4. Paul says, And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Whose responsibility is it to teach the children the truths of God's Word? I didn't hear that was a very timid answer. Who usually does it? Mother. Is that God's order? No, see.

And you know what happens if that's the way it's done? Little Johnny grows up and when he's about twelve years old he says, I want to be a man like my father. He doesn't go to church, he doesn't read the Bible, so I don't have to. Understand? The problem about the woman doing it, and God bless the women who do it, but the problem is that the boys get the impression that Christianity is something for women.

And if you're going to be a real man, you go a different route. Colossians 3.21, Paul says something that goes together with that other passage. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

See, there's a middle line. On the one hand, exercise discipline. Don't let them become undisciplined.

But at the same time, Paul says, don't provoke them. Don't discourage them. Don't be harsh and critical.

Don't cause them to give up. If you're continually pointing out to your child that he's wrong, he'll come to the point where he thinks there's no good, I might as well not try, I can't do right anyhow. So there's this middle ground.

But the responsibility is that of the father. And then in Deuteronomy 11, Moses gives some amazingly wise advice on how fathers should fulfill this responsibility for the spiritual instruction of their family. Deuteronomy 11, beginning at verse 18.

And the essence of the responsibility is to bring God's Word to your family. Deuteronomy 11, 18. Therefore you shall lay up these words and these are addressed to fathers, these words.

Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. In other words, what's to be conspicuous in your life? The Word of God. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

In other words, every situation in a family's life is an occasion for teaching Scripture's truth. Don't confine it to a religious setting on one day in the week. I have ministered to the children of quite a number of ministers over the years.

And some of them are the worst rebels. And what I discovered about them was that for most of them, their religion they viewed as a special suit that they put on to go to church on Sundays, wore in church, came back home, took it off and put it in the closet and didn't wear it again until next Sunday. See, that was partly their parents' fault.

Because if religion is worth anything it's got to be part of the daily life of the home. My first wife before I married her was mother to these girls for about eighteen years on her own. Very short of money, often without any promise of food for the next day.

But one thing she did was to get the children praying with her. She said, Children, we've got nothing for breakfast, you'd better pray. They prayed, food came, and that taught the children more about God than a dozen lessons in Sunday school.

You understand? They saw God answers my prayers. Don't ever keep children out of your spiritual life. Bring them into it.

If you're going on holiday, all pray together about the holiday, where you'll go, what you'll do. If one of the children has a problem at school, don't just correct them, say let's pray together about it. Because if children learn to pray, they'll grow up believers.

I can say that out of experience. I think of-- None of our girls have ever been without temptation, believe me. They've all had their trials and their problems.

But basically if you talk to them, they'll always remember something in their lives when God dramatically intervened. I remember one of the girls, who's not really part of our family, but she closed a big iron door on her toe and almost cut the toe off. Lydia called her and prayed and the toe was healed.

Well that girl was not by any means a model Christian, but she never escaped from the fact that she knew she had a toe because her mother prayed. My youngest, my English daughter, was about eighteen. She was with us in Kenya when we were serving there.

We went to a conference in Mombasa and met there a dear brother who's with the Lord now. Elizabeth, that's her name, was very short-sighted and her eyesight was deteriorating. Every year we had to get her

thicker glasses.

We said, Brother Matson, would you pray for Elizabeth's eyes? He prayed. She took her glasses off. We didn't tell her to do that.

So a few days later we wondered how she was doing. How are your eyes? We said. Well, she said he prayed, didn't he? She had twenty-twenty vision.

She later became a nurse and never had to wear glasses. Well, she went through her tests. But one thing she knew, God is real.

He answers prayer. That's a kind of anchor when people are carried away in the tide of this world. Let them remember something that happened in the home when you prayed with them and God answered.

See, don't keep children out of your spiritual life. Bring them into it. Finally, just one other picture of the father as prophet.

The one who represents God to his family. I have taught so many times on that Scripture as it was in the days of Noah. So shall it be in the days of the Son of Man.

And I've pointed out all the awful evils of the day of Noah. Which is all true and it's happening in front of our eyes. But one day I found out something else.

There's a good side to that. Hebrews 11, verse 7. By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. So there's another aspect of Noah's day.

Noah, the righteous man, heard from God about the disaster that was coming, made preparation and saved his family. Now I really believe that we're living in days when we're going to have to be like that. Because I think more and more sudden disasters are going to sweep the earth.

And it's no longer safe to travel by air. You never know when there'll be a bomb on the plane. But if you have the insight of Noah, you'll know how to save your family, how to protect your family.

Incidentally, this is just a little light relief for a moment. I heard about a man who was very nervous about traveling because he was afraid there would be somebody on the plane with a bomb. So a statistician told him, Well, the chances of one man on the plane with a bomb is one in 450,000.

But the chances of two men on the same plane with a bomb is one in five million. So after that he always carried a bomb. That's not recommended for the example of Noah.

All right, we're going on now to the father as king or governor. 1 Timothy 3, 4 and 5. Speaking about an elder, One who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence. For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God? The word there is rule or govern.

That's the third aspect of the ministry of the husband. He represents Christ as priest, as prophet, as king. What's the job of the king? To rule or to reign.

That's right. Now this has kind of dropped out of a lot of thinking today. We live in an atmosphere where authority is almost a dirty word.

But the fact of the matter is without authority all you have is anarchy. So we need authority. Above all we need the authority of the father in his home.

What's always impressed me is God's statement about why He chose Abraham. Let's turn to Genesis 18 for a moment. We'll read verses 17 through 19.

But let me point out about the very name of Abraham. You know his original name was Abram, which in Hebrew is Av-Ram, which means exalted father. Then when God made His second and eternal covenant with him He changed his name to Av-Raham, which means father of a multitude.

But the essence of Abraham's character was that he was a father. It was as a father that God chose him because He wanted a new nation to come from him. The Lord here in Genesis 18 reveals why He chose Abraham.

There were hundreds of thousands of men on earth at that day and amongst all of them God picked out one man to be the privileged, unique head of a new race. And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing? Since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I have known him in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.

Why did He choose him? What did He see in him that made him eligible? There's two ways of translating that. I prefer the old translation which says, I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, that they will keep the way of the Lord. This other translation says, I have known him, I've chosen him in order that he may command his children and his household.

But whichever translation you use, the fact of the matter is, the feature of Abraham's character that made him eligible for God's choice, one of the most privileged positions in history, was that God could rely on him to command his children and his household. There is a time for the father to command. There are situations in which orders have to be given and rules have to be observed.

And I'll tell you one thing, if you want to produce an unhappy child, withhold discipline from him. The most unhappy children are the ones who have no discipline in their lives. And they're the most insecure.

Because a child likes to have boundaries that give him a security. I remember my African daughter once, when she was about sixteen, was going through some of the problems that teenagers go through. Although she's a very sweet Christian girl.

She wanted to do something that was really not wise or right. And she looked at me and said, Can I do it? Will you let me? And I said, No, I won't. Because it will be bad for you.

You would have thought she would have been upset. But I saw in her face, she was relieved that I'd set a boundary. You understand? She didn't have the strength in herself to make her own boundary, but she was grateful to me for setting a boundary.

It is unfair to turn children loose, especially in the world as it is today, and make no boundaries for them. The boundaries should be simple and practical and you should be able to explain them to children. Why don't we watch such and such a program on television? Well, because it's very undermining to your spiritual and moral life.

And of course, that's one of the major problems we have today. I think probably in most households today, one of the greatest responsibilities as a father is to check the use of television. Because for me it's simple.

I never turn it on. But that's not everybody's solution. And I'm not recommending that.

I'm not saying that makes me more spiritual than anybody else. I just dislike television. Notice the other thing that the Lord said about Abraham in that passage.

Since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation. I want to tell you for sure that a nation is no greater than its fathers. If the fathers fail, a nation is sure to decline.

The strength of every nation is in the character and integrity and strength of its fathers. In Romans 4, verses 11 to 12, we don't need to turn there, we are told that Abraham is a father to all those who walk in his steps. In other words, it's not enough just to say, I'm born again and therefore Abraham is my father.

We have to walk the way he walked. And in no area is it more important than in the family. And then we need perhaps for a moment just to consider one other man who was very close to Abraham, and his name was Lot.

If you study the career of these two men, they went through a lot together. Every revelation that Abraham had. Did I say something wrong? Oh, Lot.

Sorry. Okay. Thank you.

They went through a great deal together. I agree. It should be better said.

Then they came to the place where they were going to separate. And you know what a perfect gentleman Abraham was. He didn't say, I'm going to choose this.

He said, Lot, you choose. Whatever you don't choose, I'll take. And he was the senior man, the man with the real knowledge of God, that he didn't grab.

You know that? Somebody said, God gives his best to those who leave the choice to him. Are you willing to do that? Abraham said, God, I know you'll have a room. So Lot headed for where? Sodom.

What attracted him? Basically, money. Prosperity. Lot was a lover of the world and the things of the world.

We read the end of that chapter, he was headed for Sodom. Next time we read about him, he was right inside Sodom. And a kind of respected citizen.

And then came the time when God was going to pronounce and bring judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah. And because of Abraham's intercession, God sent two angels to get Lot out of Sodom. And they said, if you've got anybody here, sons or daughters or sons-in-law, warn them because God is going to destroy this city.

And Lot went to talk to his sons-in-law. He said, God is going to send judgment. They laughed at him.

They couldn't take him seriously. And so eventually he escaped with his wife and two daughters, and his wife didn't make it because she was turned to a pillar of salt. And he left the rest of his family in Sodom.

What I want to point out to you is this. Lot led his family into Sodom, but he couldn't get them out again. What a responsibility.

Fathers, where are you leading your family? What is it that motivates you? Do you love the world and the things of the world? You're in danger of going the way of Lot. Now one brief thought as we close. How can you fulfill your responsibility as a father? This is something I have thought about much myself.

It's not just a theory that I'm handing out. I want to suggest to you maybe five things to keep in mind. Number one, acknowledge your responsibility.

Take your position. Say, God, I'm a father. I understand at least in a measure what you expect of a father.

And I accept my responsibility before you. You see, in the Bible as I've said, responsibility and authority go together. God gives authority to those who accept responsibility.

If you don't accept responsibility you won't have authority. Because that's the justice and the wisdom of God. If you will accept your responsibility, you don't have to be a tremendous success, you don't have to have all the answers, but you have to be willing to say, God, I accept my responsibility.

Then God will give you the authority that you need. Because authority comes from God. He's the only source.

Second, humble yourself before God. Acknowledge, God, this job is too big for me. I really can't handle it.

Peter said, Humble yourselves unto the mighty hand of God. God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. Do you want His grace? Humble yourself.

That's not difficult because the job of a father is so exalted that none of us is capable of fulfilling it in our own strength. Thirdly, trust God for the grace. Expect Him to give you the grace.

Exercise faith. Like if you were called to the ministry of, let's say, an evangelist. You would trust God for the grace to be an evangelist.

Well why can't you trust God for the grace to be a father? You see what I'm saying? Which is really a much more difficult ministry. My personal opinion, the two hardest jobs in the world are number one being a father and number two being a pastor. And God have mercy on the man who's both a father and a pastor.

I respect them. Fourth principle, very simple, be diligent. Give it all you've got.

It's not a part-time job. It's not something you do with your left hand. It demands all you have to do it right.

And finally, make it the first claim on your time. You see, the amount of time you give to a thing indicates the priority you give to it. Most delinquent children when they talk to counselors or youth workers, all have one complaint.

Our parents never listen to us. They would lecture us. They would tell us what to do, but they never let us talk to them.

You see, when Moses said to be a father you've got to teach your child when you walk by the way, when you sit down, when you rise up, he meant it's a full-time job. So, it takes all you've got. Doesn't mean you don't have a secular job, but it means that really being a father is your number one priority.

You give it first place in your life. Let me just recapitulate my recommendation. I want to say, frankly, I know in many areas I haven't succeeded in doing this all the time.

If I were to go through my time as a father again there's one thing I would do. I would spend more time with my children. Like many ministers, I was personally ambitious.

I wanted a successful church. Many times I think I sacrificed my family to the church. I would never do that again.

I'm sorry. Let me give you my five recommendations and we close. Acknowledge your responsibility and with responsibility goes authority.

Second, humble yourself before God. Third, trust God for the grace. Fourth, be diligent.

It's a full-time job. And fifth, make it the first claim on your time. Those of you that are fathers and husbands, I'd like to pray for you.

Would you say to stand? Wives, you just join me in praying for your husbands and the fathers of your families. Father, I want to thank you so much that your name is Father, that you are a father, that you really care about families, that the family is the way you want to make yourself known on earth. I thank you for every dear brother in Christ who's standing before you now.

Lord, I include myself amongst them. I pray, Lord, for the release of your grace in these men and in their families in a new measure from this night forward. Lord, I believe I have faith right now in the name of Jesus to release the grace upon them that they will need for your glory, Lord, in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.

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