

Discipling Dads

6/17/12

Verses from New Living Translation unless noted.

We **began** by honoring the **graduates** today, but now it's time to **honor** the dads. Dad's, I am **impressed** that you are here today. When **God** in heaven **decided** on a representative **role** for himself on earth, he chose the role, **Father**.

When **Jesus** taught his **disciples** to **pray**, he said "Pray like this; Our **Father** who is in heaven...."

Fatherhood is the best illustration of the **role** of God in our lives; a **hollowed** place; a **holy** place. It is a **sacred responsibility** to be a father; to carry that **name**. I want to **pray** for all our fathers present right now.

PRAYER - God, you taught us when we pray to call you Father. I think you wanted us to know that you treat those who are part of your family with tenderness and compassion. We are your children because we have placed our faith in Jesus.

This morning I want to pray for all the dads that are here today. I want each of them to know how much you love them and that you stand ready to help them be the kind of fathers you want them to be. I know that all of us fall short; we all have failed. We've not been the role models that we should have; we've disciplined improperly and we haven't been there many times when we should have.

But today, I'm asking for your forgiveness and I'm asking that you teach us today how to be better fathers, husbands and men. We will listen for your voice this morning; speak to us, I pray in Jesus name, Amen.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!!

I **titled** my talk today, **Discipling Dads**. Because we are in a very important **series** on discipleship, it seemed **appropriate** to take a close **look** at the role of a father in **discipling** his family.

Maybe you **didn't** know but the word "**disciple**" comes from the same **root** as "discipline". And the word "**discipline**" basically means "**to train**." In the context of the church; in the context of Christianity, that is to **train** to be **godly** or **Christ-like**.

This morning I want to give all the Dads **four principles** that will help us be better **disciplers**, trainer for our families.

We're going to look at **Philippians 2:19-30** and focus on **models of manhood** that the Bible spotlights for us.

In his book ***Missing From Action: Vanishing Manhood In America***, **Weldon Hardenbrook** offers several models of manhood that most **Americans** are familiar with.

These **models** are projected on **theater** screens and on **television** in America by our **media industry**. And, not a few **psychologists** are **suggesting** that this is contributing to a great male **identity crisis** in America.

Hardenbrook suggests **4 false models** of manhood:

- (1) **THE MACHO MANIAC** - Dirty **Harry**, **Rambo**, John McClane from **Die Hard**. **007**, Vin Diesel

They deny **feelings**,
ignore the **law**,
never **worry**,
never **complain**,
never **apologize**

- they just **sweat!!**

They accomplish the **impossible** every **8 minutes**, and take whatever they want and they **bully** people.

(2) **THE GREAT PRETENDER** - Now this **pathetic character** who **pretends** to be macho; he **builds** himself up by **belittling** others, **putting** others down, even his **wife** and **family**.

He **imagines** that he **rules** his family, and that he **knows more** than he actually does about almost **everything**. In **reality** people **don't respect** him, don't **value** him.

(3) **THE WORLD-CLASS WIMP** - The **George McFly** and **Homer Simpsons**.

They are men who **continually exhibit** their **ineptitude** being constantly **outwitted** by their **children**, their **wives** and even their **dogs**. You **rarely** take them **serious** because they are always **bumbling** and **blundering**.

(4) **THE GENDER BLENDERS** - They **don't** even pretend to be **masculine**. They are **caught** in the tension of **role reversal** and identity **confusion**.

Let's **begin** our study this morning by reading from **Paul's letter** to the church at Philippi.

Philippians 2:19-30 "If the Lord Jesus is willing, I hope to send Timothy to you soon for a visit. Then he can cheer me up by telling me how you are getting along. ²⁰ I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare.

²¹ All the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ. ²² But you know how Timothy has proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has served with me in preaching the Good News.

²³ I hope to send him to you just as soon as I find out what is going to happen to me here. ²⁴ And I have confidence from the Lord that I myself will come to see you soon.

²⁵ Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need. ²⁶ I am sending him because he has been longing to see you, and he was very distressed that you heard he was ill. ²⁷ And he certainly was ill; in fact, he almost died. But God had mercy on him—and also on me, so that I would not have one sorrow after another.

²⁸ So I am all the more anxious to send him back to you, for I know you will be glad to see him, and then I will not be so worried about you. ²⁹ Welcome him with Christian love and with great joy, and give him the honor that people like him deserve. ³⁰ For he risked his life for the work of Christ, and he was at the point of death while doing for me what you couldn't do from far away."

There are three **Godly models** of **manhood** provided for us here, which can help every man better understand his **role** in **society**, in his **family** and in God's **church**. These models will make us better **husbands**, better **fathers** and better **men**.

I believe **God** desires to **train** us as men, if we'll let him; to fashion each of us into compassionate **fathers**, loving **husbands** and committed **servants** of Jesus Christ.

Our **willingness** to allow him to do his **work** in us is determinative in the **success** we experience in these areas.

*"Being **male** is a matter of **birth**.
Being a **man** is a matter of **training**."*

As we examine our passage this morning let's look for some **characteristics** of true **manhood** from these Biblical **models**.

"A man's greatness is not determined by the value of his wealth, but by the wealth of his values."

Here are **4 VALUES OF TRUE MANHOOD**

1st COMPASSION – People before Profit

Men who put people before profits.

In the **first part** of this letter Paul's you can see a **deep compassion** and love Paul has for the people in **Philippi**. Listen to these **statements** Paul makes about the **believers** in that city.

1:3-4 "Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy..."

v.7-8 "So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart... God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus."

Now **listen** to what **Paul** says of **Timothy** in 2:20 "I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare."

Where did Timothy's **interest** in the people of **Philippi** come from? **Where** did Timothy **develop** his compassion for people? **Paul** is Timothy's **discipler**. The **young** man, Timothy evidently **learned** it from Paul.

Now the **great mistake** of the men in **our generation** is that many **instead** of **loving people** and **using things** - they love **things** and **use** people.

God wants men who put **people** before **profits**. Loving **relationships** in the long run will **prove** to be one of your most **valuable** assets.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13, "If I don't have love, I am **nothing**."

Do you know what a **nothing** is? It's a big **zero** with the **edges** erased.

One of the **saddest** examples of **manhood** ever witnessed in the **last** generation was **Howard Hughes**; a man who truly **used people** and **loved things** most his life. When he died his estate was worth somewhere between \$7 and \$8 billion.



And at the **end** he was all **alone**; **utterly and completely alone**.

When **everything** else is **gone**, the apostle Paul said, three things will **remain** - Faith, hope and **love**. And Paul says "**the greatest of these is love**."

"Love never fails." 1 Corinthians 13:8. If you've **got nothing** else in your life but **love**, you've got the **most valuable** thing.

1 John 4:7-8 **"Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love."**

Though Timothy had probably **learned** from Paul the **priority** of loving people, **Paul** himself had been just the **opposite** before he **met Christ**. He was a man of **great learning** and **achievement** but there is **no evidence** that he had any **compassion** at all.

He was actually **on his way** to **slaughter** Christ followers in **Damascus** when Jesus Christ got a hold of him. The **change** in his life was one of the **most dramatic** in Christian history.

From **that point** on people became his **priority**. Though he was **never married** he had **more** to **say** about loving **marriage** relationships than any **other N.T. writer**. Paul **understood**

compassion and love, and he **passed** it on to his young disciple, **Timothy**.

There was **"no one like him"**; he took such a **genuine interest** in others; a **priceless characteristic** of a true man.

What about it **Dad's**? Husbands?

The **Phillip's** translation says **of those** Paul **compared** Timothy to: **"...they are all wrapped up in their own affairs."** (verse 21)

How **wrapped up** are **you** in your own affairs? One **observer humorously** noted, a **daddy** who's all **wrapped up** in his own affairs **isn't** a daddy at all - he's a **mummy!!**

Where does a **child** learn love and **compassion**?

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An **inmate** at the Ventura County Jail (John Peters), shared with me the **pain** of his **childhood**, much of it caused by a **Dad** who **wasn't there** for him. I **don't** believe most DADS **intend** to cause that kind of pain. They are just **so busy** doing their own thing, there's **no time** for compassionate interest in their children.

Compassion: a true value of manhood.

2nd CONSISTENCY - character before convenience

Paul says of Timothy, **"no one else is like him,"** everyone else is **looking out** for their own **interests**.

Verse 22 **"But you know how Timothy has proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has served with me in preaching the Good News."**

How many times are we tempted to **compromise** our **standards** or our **integrity** or our **commitments** because they are **inconvenient**? Children never forget a **promise**, do they?

Things were getting **tough** where Paul was. There was a lot of **opposition**, both **outside** the church and **inside** the church. There were other **church leaders** who **disagreed** with Paul and were **criticizing** him. No wonder Paul valued Timothy's **loyalty** and consistency.

I'll bet you've **known** people who've **said** one thing and **done** another; **bosses** or employers who've **promised** things but haven't **come through** with them. **Spouses** who vowed "**until death do us part**" but have **deserted** their families.

In verse **22** it says "*Timothy has **proved** himself.*" That word refers to **tested character**. That **honors** God! When **your word** is **your bond**.

Jackie and I were **talking** about a **man** in our church who, when he says he'll **do something**, you don't have to **ask** him a 2nd time. You don't have to **remind** him. If he **said** it - it's as good as **done**.

What a **rare quality**! I'm sure God expects us to be men who are committed to their **values**; men who will take a stand for what is **right** and follow through on our **promises**.

Maybe you've **heard** it said, "*If you **don't stand** for something, you'll **fall** for anything.*"

Men are **falling** all over the place because they've **failed** to take a stand. We have to **know** God's word; **know** what's **right** and take a **stand**.

A value of true manhood: **CONSISTENCY**: Men who will put **character** before **convenience**.

3rd COMMUNITY - cooperation before competition

Now speaking of **another model** of manhood Paul says in verse 25: "**I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need.**"

Now **Epaphroditus** was not from **Rome** where Paul is in prison, **nor** was he one of Paul's regular **traveling** companions. Epaphroditus was **from** the church in **Philippi**.

I **think** that Epaphroditus was a **leader** in the church at Philippi - maybe even one of its **pastors**; well **respected**, highly thought of.

They had **trusted** him with the **financial gift** they were sending to Paul. He had **delivered** it faithfully, and **then stayed** on a while to **serve** Paul. Paul **addresses** him as his "**true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier.**"

There is **no hint** of **competition** from **either** of them. Remember, Paul **started** that church and **obviously loved** the people dearly. He could have been **possessive** and **resented** other leadership.

When other leaders are **criticizing** Paul, evidently **envious** of his success, Epaphroditus doesn't **join** them. He doesn't seem to **resent** at all the **love** and support his own church **offered** to Paul. **NO COMPETITION!**

Years ago I was on the staff of **Campus Crusade Christ**. I was on **High School** ministry staff in **Atlanta**, Ga. But, there were **other** youth **ministries** in town; **Youth** for Christ, **Young** Life, **Fellowship** of Christian Athletes. They **all** worked with students.

But we were **taught** that we were not to **compete** but to **cooperate** with other Christian ministries. The same is true here in this city with the Camarillo **Ministerial Association**. We don't

compete with the other churches in town; we cooperate whenever possible.

Yesterday there was a city-wide effort to **honor fathers** with a free **car wash**, donuts and **coffee**. A number of churches in town **joined** the effort to **serve Dads** in the name of **Christ**.

There is a **triple basis** for our cooperation that **Paul** notes in this verse.

- (1) **"true brother"** – we're a **family**. - I have a large wall **plaque** that I **inherited** when my **parents** died. The plaque was given to my **father** at his retirement. It reads:

Brother Ralph
Olympia Baptist Church
January 1, 1956
March 18, 1973
"Well Done, Thou Good and Faithful Servant."

My **Dad** served that church over **17 years** and was known as, **Brother Ralph** (yep, I'm a junior) - **133** times in the **N.T.** the term **brother** was used to indicate a **spiritual** relationship. They **recognized** they were a **family**.

- (2) **"co- worker"** – This scripture is **clear**; we **don't** work for our **salvation**. Salvation is not a **reward** for the good things we have done. **Rather**, it is a **free** gift. But, there is **work** to be done.

We **don't** work our way **to** salvation. We work our way **from** salvation. Once we're **saved** we work in the **family business**.

We work **together** - You **row** on your side of the **boat** and I'll row on **mine**. **If** only **one** of us rows, we'll only go in **circles**.

- (3) **"fellow soldier"** – Paul knew it was a **battle**.

There's a **war** going on for our **children** and we're in this **battle** together. I'm so **grateful** for the **moms and dads** who are going up to **Fryathon**. Many of them have taken **off work** to go and they are going up to **serve** the kids of parents who can't go.

We have a **common enemy**, and one of the **reasons** the church hasn't been more **effective** over the past **2,000 years** is because we don't know how to work together. We too often **compete** and too seldom **cooperate**.

Iron 27 is a new ministry here at our church, for men and boys. The **intention** is to help us **dads** do a better job **raising** Christian young men. We know it's **not easy**. We need to **help** each other.

We need to act like true **brothers**, **co-workers**, and fellow **soldiers**. We need to **take up** for each other, watch each **other's backs**, take a **hit** for each other, support and **encourage** each other.

One **study** concluded that only **1 man in 10** has a real **friend**. 1 in 10! We've got to **do better** than that if we're going to **survive**; if our **marriages** are going to make it; if we're going to become the kind of **fathers** we need to be we're going to have to help each other. We must **cooperate**.

4th COMMITMENT - Christ before comfort
Men who put Christ before comfort.

Paul says of Epaphroditus in verse 30, "**he risked his life for the work of Christ, and he was at the point of death...**"

The **journey** from Philippi to Rome was about **800 miles** over land and sea. It took approximately **6 weeks** to make. Travel then was a lot **different** from travel today. And, **carrying** a large sum of **money** was extremely **risky**. But Epaphroditus went.

He evidently got very **sick** and almost **died**. But he put the **cause** of **Christ** before personal **comfort**.

Some **years** ago, while in **Hong Kong**, and then **India**, on a ministry trip, I picked up an **intestinal parasite** that made me so sick I thought I was going to **die**. It hung on for **months** after I **returned** to the U.S.

Have **you** ever gotten **sick** away from **home**? When you were on a **trip**? It's **no fun**. If you have, maybe you **know a little** of what Epaphroditus **experienced**. But he put his commitment to **Christ** before personal **comfort**.

Dads, when we got **married**, we made a **commitment** to **Christ**; it **wasn't** just to our **bride**. **Most** of us were married in a **church** or by a **pastor**. And even if you **weren't**, Jesus said,

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." Matthew 19:5-6 (NIV)

We are no longer **committed** to this relationship because it's **comfortable**, but because God has **sanctified** the relationship. He put his **stamp** on it. It's now a **sacred** obligation.

There are approximately **76 million** children in the U.S. ages **0-17**. Of those **27 million**, **36%**, live apart from their biological fathers. **60%** of those **haven't seen** their father in the **past year**.

Does it make a **difference**? YES! Over the last **three decades**, the **research** has proven that children living **without** their biological fathers are **2-3x's** more likely to grow up in **poverty**, and to have significant **educational, health, emotional** and **psychological** problems.

And, they are much more likely to suffer **child abuse**, and to engage in **criminal** behavior, than peers living with their married, biological mother and father.

Fatherless homes produce:

- **63%** of youth **suicides**
- **90%** of all **runaway** children
- **85%** of all children with **behavioral disorders**
- **85%** of all youths in **prison**
- **75%** of youth in **chemical abuse centers**
- **71%** of high school **drop outs**

Is the dad **important**? You'd better **believe** he is. And of course, it's **not** just the **27 million** children who will go to **bed** this evening without their **Daddy** at home, it's also the untold **millions** of households with a man who is **physically present** but **emotionally** and **spiritually** absent.

God is looking for men of commitment, who are willing to put Christ before comfort.

2 Chronicles 16:9 (NIV) **"For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him."**

God is **looking** for men whose hearts are **committed** to Him. You say, "I'm **hesitant** to make a **commitment** because I'm **not sure** I have the **strength** to carry it through."

Notice what he **says** - He's looking for **heart** commitment. If you'll give him the commitment of your heart, **he'll strengthen** you and carry it out.

Review: God is looking for men of

COMPASSION:
who put people before profits.

CONSISTENCY:
who put character before convenience.

COMMUNITY:
who put cooperation before competition.

COMMITMENT:
who put Christ before comfort.

I'm going to ask the men here this morning to respond to what you've heard today. If in your heart this morning you want to be the model of manhood God wants you to be; if in your heart you truly want to be God's man.

I'm going to ask you to raise your hand in a moment as we bow in prayer. We're going to close our eyes, not because we don't think you should make this commitment public, but rather to protect the privacy of those who are not ready to make a commitment like this yet.