

2008 FATHER'S DAY- LESSONS FOR A FATHER

Luke 15:11-23

Today is father's day. A day to celebrate men and being a man.

I like being a man, because:

1. Car mechanics tell me the truth
2. I can trim my nails with a pocketknife.
3. I can wear the same hair-style for years -- maybe decades.

A mother and her four year old were looking thru the old family pictures, the boy pointed to a handsome young man with dark, curly hair—WHOS that?

The Mothers said: "That's your father".

The boy looked confused. "Then who's the bald guy who lives with us now?"

There is a sad side to men: the George Barna Research Group said:

American men "represent one of the most pagan subcultures on earth today," .

Only 2 out of 6 men go to church and most of the men who attend just aren't "getting it."

It seems like the gospel bounces off their souls like bullets off Superman's chest.

Only 29 percent of American men read the Bible

Most go to worship only because of habit,

Or to please their wives/mothers/ or girlfriends.

What's worse is that their sons follow them in this lifelong habit.

But I believe most of you men are here today because you want to be different.

And you want to be a servant of God who makes a difference

In your home, in your family, and in your world.

So lets take a look at the story of the Prodigal Son and see

Five things God gives us to become a better man..

First of all God gives us the ability to

I. LISTEN BEFORE WE ACT.

To NOT ACT IMPULSIVELY.

11 There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

Luke 15:11-13

The first thing we see is this father didn't react impulsively.

He listened to his younger son.

Because this father knew both his sons,

He knew his oldest son was stable and secure.

He would stay and take over the farm.

He had it in him.

He was a good worker, tireless in the fields,

The father knew his elder son would do well when he was gone.

This father also knew his younger son.

He watched him staring off into space

He saw his son's wild ambition.

"So he divided the property between them.

We don't have children and raise them
 not knowing what they will do.
 So when the son came to ask for his inheritance,
 This father didn't react impulsively,
 He would let his son learn the hard way—Its called tough love.
 The only thing that would soften it was knowing
 God loves our children more than we do and
 Only he can protect them in a foreign land.
 All he could do was to pray and
 Ask God to protect his son

The custom of that time allowed sons to demand and receive
 a portion of the inheritance during the father's lifetime;
 The father could not legally refuse to comply with the request
 even aware of the son's bad judgments and loose living

So this honest and caring father gave his son his inheritance early
 He obeyed the law knowing the son would waste the money.

However the law also said that if the courts found the father's character honest and true,
 They could fine and discipline the son for wanting to leave the father and the farm.

Which is probably why we read in Verse 13. *Not many days after*

13 "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country .. Luke 15:13a

He hastened his departure to escape the courts judgment,
 Even then the courts were protecting the family farm.

The father trusted God with his younger son,
 And he acted with confidence not impulsively.

Secondly God helps us as Christian men to

**II. GIVE UP OUR DESIRES FOR GOOD
 NOT EQUATE OUR DESIRES WITH WHATS RIGHT.**

13 "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. Luke 15:13

When were young we believed that what we desire was right...

If I want it, desire it, it must be good, it must be right.

The son wanted a different life.

He acted on what he desired,

He abandoned the family and the farm.

Now this wasn't Father Abraham with many sons.

This aging father had only two sons to run the place.

It was a big farm.

The younger son claimed his desires and discarded what was right.

The father exercised what he knew was right, surrendered his desires.

Sometime all the training and love in the world

Won't help a rebellious heart.
 Maybe if this father had lived today he would have
 Sent this son off to the military to see the far country.
 Much better to be under the strong arm of the military
 Than off wandering alone in the far country
 But we must train and do all that we can while we can.

I rather like the story Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick told how his father had said to his mother upon leaving the house one Saturday: "Tell Harry that he can cut the grass today, if he feels like it." Then, halfway down the walk, his father turned once more to add: "And tell Harry that he had better feel like it."

One of the scariest moments for parents
 Is when it is clear that the child has taken the parent "inside."
 They actually began to believe and act, talk and live like we do.
 Then the question is?
 Have we lived our lives for what is right and true?
 Or have we lived our lives for our desires?
 Because our children will follow and imitate what we are.
 90% of boys will abandon church by their 20th birthday.

Third God gives to a man the ability to
III. SEE OUR OWN LIMITS.
 The father let the younger son go,
 Because he saw his own limits.
 But the youngest son left unaware of his limits.

But God being the teacher He is, put the boy in a place to educate him.
14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.
 The quickest way to exhaust the body,
 Debase the mind,
 Ruin to soul,
 And destroy the substance of life,
 Is to live with abandonment to our lust and desires.

When we do not know our limits
 We become an easy target to the famine of wordly desires.
We can get all puffed up about ourselves.

When Chris Herter was governor of Massachusetts, he was campaigning for another term. He arrived at a church barbecue famished. He held out his plate to the woman serving chicken, and she put one piece on his place and said "next."
 Governor Herter said, "Excuse me, do you mind if I have another piece of chicken?"
 The woman said: "Sorry one piece of chicken for each person,"
 "But I'm starved," the governor said.
 The woman said again. "Sorry only one to a customer."

Governor Herter, a modest and unassuming man, decided that this time he would throw weight around. "Do you know who I am?" he said. "I am the governor of this state." The woman said: "Do you know who I am? I'm the lady in charge of the chicken. Move along, mister."

This young son lost his focus to the point
That he was no longer living with people
But now cared for pigs.
An abhorrent profession to the Jews.
the lowest of all jobs.
He even desired what they were eating.

16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

Note verse 17: *He came to himself.*

17 "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!

He came to his senses,
was a common phrase applied to one who had been insane,
Mentally unstable.
The folly of the young man was a kind of derangement
So it is of every sinner.
Sin causes us to have a
Madness in our hearts

There is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of men, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead. Ecclesiastes 9:3

Every wonder why a person lost in the sin and lust of the world
Can commit such crimes and acts of violence?
Sin separates us from reason, from self control.
We are estranged from God and from others.
And our soul dies.

**But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives.
I Timothy 5:6**

But do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. Romans 6:13

God intervened.
He opened his eyes to his Father's love.

18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

**Dads, the kindness and care that you have shown your family
As a Godly man will return unto you.**

This son remembered his loving, caring and praying father.
This passage gives us the nine most precious words a father could ever hear.

20 So he got up and went to his father.

If you're a parent here worth your breakfast cereal
 You're a parent who prays and watches
 As God works thru some twisted desires,
 Some bad choices and a belligerent pride.
 To bring your child back home to you.
 Are you praying?
 Are you watching?

This next step God gives a man is to

IV. RECOGNIZE ANGER AS SIN.

ANGER IS A SIGN THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG IN ME.

We learn this lesson from the older son.

25 "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing.

The Hebrews celebrated with music and dancing.

The older son must have first thought.

“Wow, Dad has finally recognized all the work I have done

And has put on a party for me.”

26 So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on.

27 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

Anger explodes

All his hate for his brother finally came out.

Watching what the loss did to his father.

Taking on the extra work and responsibly.

28 "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. 31 "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.

The elder son could have had a party anytime.

It was his to have.

But for whatever reason,

He couldn't get over his self pity and

His brothers abandonment.

“He was out having fun while I was stuck at home doing the work.

I played by the rules.

And now this renegade son is back.”

29 But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

You see the elder son represents the Pharisees and scribes.

They were playing by the rules in their synagogues and temple.

And now Jesus was bringing in sons and daughters of the far country

Souls of person who never obeyed any rules.

And saying they too were welcomed?

No, they couldn't be.
 We have our pride.
 We have our rules.
 We are the chosen.
 But their anger was a red flag sent by God to show
 Them they were not right.
 Their pride was exaggerated.
 Their rules were unmanageable.

What makes you angry in your life?
 Is God trying to show us that there is an issue that need to be dealt with?
 A hurt that needs to be healed?
 A pride that needs to be confessed?
 A jealousy that need to be revealed?
 We must deal with if were to be free.

31 "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' Luke 15:31-32

Last we learn to

**V. WALK AWAY FROM SIN AND RETURN TO GOD.
 WALK AWAY FROM THINGS THAT AREN'T RIGHT.**

The younger son,
 Lost in squalor and death of sin and the far country
 Got up and walked away.
 He left what he knew wasn't right.
 He had spent it all. He had nothing. He was a sinner,
 far from God, far from his father in a land of strangers.
 His condition was wretched. He was alone, lost
 But most of all he knew it,

Maybe we have gotten too close to the things of the world
 There are some things in your life we need to walk away from.
 A relationship that is way too friendly... walk away.
 A addiction that is getting way too powerful....walk away.
 Or an investment that is way too controlling...walk away
 An attitude that is way to hateful and spiteful...walk away.

If you do you will find a Heavenly Father waiting for you.

20 So he got up and went to his father. When he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. Luke 15:20

God isn't concerned about what you have done.
 But he is concerned that you get up
 And come back home.
 And if you do you will discover a heavenly father with open arms.
 Who will help you overcome the world.
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