

Pattern For Fathers

Psalm 37:23

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."

You see, the whole idea was God's, who made Adam to be the bridegroom of Eve, to be the bride. God pronounced and preformed the first marriage while the birds were singing, while the animals looked on in wonder and God inaugurated the first home. And God gave the members of the home, each member of the family a unique responsibility. He gave some very wise instructions. It narrows down to this: successful husbands and fathers are those who follow God's directives. At our convention, I had the opportunity of listening to the Governor of the State of Georgia, Jimmy Carter. He began his remarks by saying, I'm a politician, I am a businessman, I am a nuclear physicist, I am a governor, I am a Christian and I am a father. He said that the best part of my life is that I am a Christian. The next best part of my life that I try to make important is that I be a father. Because everyone is only worth what he emulates in Jesus Christ. And we can be either Pharisees or Publicans. We can be humble in God's sight as this Governor, who said that one of the important tasks that he felt he had was being a good father. I heard a man from Iowa who worked on the highways, just a laborer on the highways. But who, a couple and a half years ago, met Christ. He had been given to drink for 15 years. His home was a wreck. Finally, his wife was converted; they were about on the verge of divorce. This man gave a testimony. He said, I finally reached the place where I promised God that if God would save our home that we'd try to live for Him and serve Him. One week after I was converted, he said, some friend came by and said, you know it's visitation night at the church and I think we ought to go. And he had just accepted Christ the week before. So, he said, I couldn't think of anybody better to go and see than one of my old buddies that I'd been drinking with. I felt that he needed a Christian home. And so he went. He didn't get very far, but, he said, but I left a religious tract. He said, my old buddie read that tract and about 7 days later he accepted the Lord as his saviour.

Then he said that it was visitation time again and they went out again. He and this buddie. So he said that he reconed that we ought to go were some of our friends hang out. So they went to the tavern. We got in the tavern and told the keeper what we wanted to do. We wanted to give our testimony about what Jesus had done for us. So the tavern operator said, well I suspect that if that's what you're going to do, we'd better shut off this jukebox. So he cut it off. So these two men talked to those six or seven who were drinking in that place. The thing that impressed me about this man was this. He said, you really don't have to know a whole lot to witness for Christ. All you have to know is that you have Jesus Christ in your heart and you can witness. If any man loves Jesus Christ in his heart, he can tell somebody else about that love. And that's what the Psalmist says here. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. This is his guideline. This is his role in life. This is the way he will go if he is a man who walks his whole life in the steps of God his whole life will be ordered in that direction. Now I want to use some very simple words, some very plain words that will help us to fix in our minds what I think is a good pattern for a father. First of all, I think a father is a provider. He's a provider. He provides security and he provides food. And I think this is very important that fathers understand this responsibility. Because in the Bible it tells us in 1st Timothy 5:8, if any provide not for his own and especially for those in his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel. Any man that will not provide for his family and for his own home, the scripture says is worse than an infidel. In the 16th verse of this Psalm it says this, a little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked. A righteous man may not have a multitude mountain of money. But what he does have, God will multiply it to care for his family. In verse 25 of this 37th Psalm it says this, I have been young and now I am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken or his seed beging bread. This was the experience of David. David said, I was a young man, now I am old. And he said, I have seen the security that a righteous man has.

And furthermore, he said, I have witnessed to the fact and I have seen that the righteous man does not have to beg for bread. That he can count on God to provide his daily food for him. So first of all, a father is a provider, he provides food. Second, he provides identity. When a man marries a woman, and they become Mr. and Mrs. she gives up her name. She has left the name of her birth and she has now taken on his name. And if we could move that out of that realm into the realm in which we are united and linked with God through Jesus Christ and his family, we take on the likeness of Jesus Christ. And the whole home takes on the likeness of the man in the home. The whole family takes on the likeness of the father. This is the pattern in God's word. Many mothers and many wives have to do wonders to maintain a religious life and devotion to Christ. But what I'm saying is this is the responsibility of the man. He is the provider of the identity in the home. He should set the standard. He should be the leader. And in the third place he is a provider of unity. By him all things consist, the Bible says about Jesus Christ. And in the home, by the father, all things are held together like a stack pole. The stack pole is used by the farmers to stack hay around. And that holds the hay together. One position, and the father, the husband is the one in the home who provides such a unity that the home has something to hold to. He is the man who is to stand and to be one that is to be strong enough that all the rest of the family can hold to him and know that he is going to stand in the right place. In the fourth place, he is a provider of their destiny. The father is the one who gives direction to the family. He is the one who is able to say follow me. Like Jesus said follow me. In every area of life, the father ought to be the one who says you follow me in this direction and I will lead you into truth. In verse 31 it says here, the law of his God is in his heart. None of his steps shall slide. He's talking about the good man. The law of God in his heart he is going to provide for his family. Second of all, The pattern for a father is that he is a protector. In the 24th verse of this chapter, notice what we read. Though he fall he will not be utterly cast down. For the Lord upholdeth him with his right hand.

In other words, the good man is never really defeated. I believe that with all my heart. That the good man, no matter what may come, what trial may beset him, he is never truly defeated. Because he is the one who protects his family. He protects his family physically. He stands between them and possible harm. If he is the right kind of father, he doesn't want any harm to come to his wife, his children. He protects them socially. He protects them spiritually. He stands against untruth from coming into his home. In verse 28, it says, for the Lord loveth judgement and forsaketh not his saints. They are preserved forever, forever. The husband is the one who is filled with the spirit of God. As Jesus lived, He lives. He protects his home. In the third place, the father is a priest. Now I think this is according to the New Testament. In verse 34, I get this idea. Wait on the Lord and keep His way and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land. Wait on the Lord means you're a priest, you pray. A priest is a representative and the father is a representative of his home and he is the one who is responsible for intercession. There ought never be a father who does not intercede for his wife, for his children, for his home. This is God's pattern for a father. That he be a intercessor for his family. Jack Taylor keeps a little prayer notebook. He makes little entries in it. Daily or ever how often, it comes to mind. But I was very interested in reading what he had to say about his family. He said, I pray for my son and I pray in the words of the scripture for him. He says, I pray for, his name is Timothy. He says, I pray for my son Timothy. I pray that Tim will continue in the things that he has seen and heard and be wise unto salvation which is in Jesus Christ. I pray that the word may be profitable for Tim in doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction and righteousness; that Tim may be as a man of God very furnished unto all good works. 2nd Timothy 3:14,17. Isn't that just wonderful. That a father would pray the scriptures for his son. An intercessor. On another occasion, I pray for my son the 1st Psalm. And you know that tells you about a good man. My dear friends, just because this father prays for his son does not mean that the son is relieved of

praying for himself. But I found another little sketch where Jack Taylor prayed for his daughter. And he prayed from the book of Proverbs for Tammy. And he prayed this prayer, and the very God of peace sanctify Tammy wholly and I pray God Tammy's whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he, he calls her, who will also do it. This is 1st Thessalonians 5:23. He just simply prays the promises for his daughter, his girl. And I just couldn't lay that little book down until I finished reading how he prayed for his wife. I pray for my wife, sometimes I recite Colossians 1:9. And I desire that Barbara might be filled with the knowledge of God's wisdom and spiritual understanding that she might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing being faithful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God that Barbara might be strengthened according to His glorious power unto all patience and long-suffering and joyfulness. 2nd Thessalonians 3:5 and Colossians 1:9-11. Can't you really see that you as a father involved. Can't you really see that you as a daddy and a father tonight has something you can give as an inheritance to your son, your daughter, your wife. It takes a lot of time to earn a living and to earn food to put on the table. Ah, but it takes a little time to pray for the family. And I would say that every father is a priest. If you're not praying for your family, I want to say to you fathers tonight that this would be a good time to make a resolve in your heart that you're going to pray for your families. How much it might transform. In the next place I think that the father is a professor; he's a teacher. For he conducts a classroom; he ought to be the best teacher there is in the home against pollution, against immorality, against sin, against things that ought not to be there. The father ought to be the one who is able to do the teaching and not leave it up to the mother. Too many fathers today let things slide along and never say anything to their children about things that are wrong. In verse 30, it says that the mouth of the righteous man, the mouth of the good man speaketh wisdom and his tongue talketh of judgement. Ah, if you are the right kind of a father, you're going to speak wisdom. In the last and

final place, I will not have time to explore this, but I want to say to you this, the father is a partaker of peace in the home in verse 37. It says this, mark the perfect man, mark the good man and behold the upright for the end of that man is peace. We are partners in our homes and business. And the father is the one, if he is the right kind of man, and if his steps are ordered by the Lord, sorrows will be shared together, blessings will be received together, problems will be considered together. All that we face in our families and in our homes will be faced together. The end of a good man is peace. Ah, God speaks in so many ways through our hearts. On the plane coming back from Dallas, I was seated by a little lady that I got in conversation with. Now my wife was on the other side in the other seat. But this lady was on the other; this was a three-way affair. And I began conversation with her and she had come over here from Belfast and had been living in California. And I began to talk with her about her family. And you know how much sorrow I have already gone through but I listened patiently and showed my concern. And with mist in her eyes she said, four years ago, I lost my daughter in an accident. And she said to me, sir, I continued to ask questions about it. But oh I said, dear friend, God loves you. And God's ways are not our ways because tomorrow all of us are going home. We're here for a little interlude on this earth and God is sovereign. And the only thing we need to know is that God is in control of sickness, health and death and all that might come to us. God is in control of all of this. Life's mysteries are unknown to us but they're not unknown to God. And we see more of God's love reflected in crisis perhaps than at any other time. My prayer, my hope, my challenge, my all to you tonight is what I gave that little woman. Ah, if she but had a godly husband. The steps of a good man who are ordered by the Lord; how much lighter her burden might be.