

A Father's Legacy

Ephesians 6:4

Introduction

Proverbs 13:22 – A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, And the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.

For most children, their father will be one of the two greatest influences in their entire lives. Whether that influence is positive or maximized depends upon choices the father makes.

Today we're going to look at the impact a father can have on his children from two different perspectives. First let's look at the areas of life where a father can have great lifelong influence on a child.

Background Passage:

Ephesians 6:4 – And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

And look at all of these passages in Proverbs about how a father trains and instructs his children:

Proverbs 1:8 – Hear, my son, your father's instruction, And do not forsake your mother's teaching;

Proverbs 4:1 – Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, And give attention that you may gain understanding,

Proverbs 6:20 – My son, observe the commandment of your father, And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;

Proverbs 23:22 – Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.

Is this passage talking specifically about a father formally teaching his children?

No, the truth of the matter is that a father is always teaching his children. By his words, actions, values, and attitudes.

So men, you are always teaching your children. By what you do, and what you don't do. What you say, and what you don't say. And what you value above things you don't value as much.

Here is a list of at least a few of the areas where a father's influence can significantly influence their children's direction and thus, their destination.

Character

Integrity

Proverbs 20:7 – A righteous man who walks in his integrity--How blessed are his sons after him.

Everything in your life fits together – no hypocrisy. Children see hypocrisy better than anyone else.

Keep your promises – even things that don't sound like promises. You always do what you say.

Prov. 15:4 - ...He swears to his own hurt, and does not change;

Diligence (Work ethic)

Proverbs 13:4 – The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, But the soul of the diligent is made fat.

Hard worker. Don't expect stuff for free. No get rich quick schemes.

Persist without exception.

Honesty

Proverbs 10:9 – He who walks in integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will be found out.

Always tells the truth. Always.

Fair play

Proverbs 11:1 – A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, But a just weight is His delight.

Cheating is playing by a different set of rules than your competition.

Having a double standard – a different standard for your behavior than others.

Sportsmanship

Proverbs 24:17 – Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles;

Make the person more important than winning.

Values

“They will not be what they do not see in me.” – Jamie Coomer

Discipline

Proverbs 3:12 – For whom the LORD loves He reproves, Even as a father, the son in whom he delights.

Proverbs 13:24 – He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

Disciplining your child shows them that you value them.

Success

Proverbs 22:1 – A good name is to be more desired than great riches, Favor is better than silver and gold.

Joshua 1:7-8 – “Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. ⁸This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

What is success?

Your children will see your definition of success by what you spend your time pursuing, what you want more of, and what you admire.

Beauty / Attractiveness

1 Timothy 4:7-8 – ⁷But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; ⁸for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. ⁹It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. ¹⁰For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

Is “bodily discipline” talking about exercise? One could argue that Paul’s audience was far too involved in daily survival to be concerned about having to exercise and that therefore this must be talking about becoming skilled at a trade, i.e., practice. But there certainly were some in the day who were athletes, often used by Paul as a metaphor. Additionally, later in this paragraph (v10) Paul says, “for this we labor and strive...” Gundry translates the second word, “compete,” which forced me to ask the question, why the quite different sense from KJV, etc. (“suffer reproach”, and even NASB, NIV, etc.?

The Greek word there in v.10 is a challenging question for the textual critic. A strong case can be made for both ονειδίζομεθα and αγωνιζομεθα due to the solid external evidence for either. The latest scholarship on this matter favors the latter due to slightly better external support and fit in the context of Paul’s argument. (--Bruce Metzger) Therefore, the translation of that preferred variant of “wrestling, competing, fighting” (or “striving” as an attempt to roughly accommodate both variants), gives us strong contextual support for the earlier statement in verse 8 to, in fact, be talking about physical exercise.

“According to this maxim bodily exercise benefits the body; but the benefit is minor in comparison with that of religious exercise for piety, because this kind of exercise benefits a person ‘in all respects.’” – Robert Gundry

3679 ονειδίζο oneidizo {on-i-did'-zo}

AV - upbraid 3, reproach 3, revile 2, suffer reproach 1; 10

1) to reproach, upbraid, revile

1a) of deserved reproach

1b) of undeserved reproach, to revile

1c) to upbraid, cast (favours received) in one's teeth

75 αγωνιζομαι agonizomai {ag-o-nid'-zom-ah-ee}

AV - strive 3, fight 3, labour fervently 1; 7

1) to enter a contest: contend in the gymnastic games

2) to contend with adversaries, fight

3) metaph. to contend, struggle, with difficulties and dangers

4) to endeavour with strenuous zeal, strive: to obtain something

1 Samuel 16:7 – But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

1 Peter 3:3-4 – ³And let not your adornment be merely external--braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; ⁴but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

Proverbs 31:30 – Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.

Psalms 147:10-11 – ¹⁰He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He does not take pleasure in the legs of a man. ¹¹The LORD favors those who fear Him, Those who wait for His lovingkindness.

What beauty matters?

How do we effectively convey that?

Choices

Matthew 13:44-46 – ⁴⁴“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field. ⁴⁵Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, ⁴⁶and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

Matthew 16:26 – “For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

1 Kings 3:5-14 – ⁵In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, “Ask what you wish me to give you.” ⁶Then Solomon said, “Thou hast shown great lovingkindness to Thy servant David my father, according as he walked before Thee in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart toward Thee; and Thou hast reserved for him this great lovingkindness, that Thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. ⁷And now, O LORD my God, Thou hast made Thy servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And Thy servant is in the midst of Thy people which Thou hast chosen, a great people who cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. ⁹So give Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Thine?” ¹⁰And it was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing. ¹¹And God said to him, “Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice, ¹²behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you. ¹³And I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days. ¹⁴And if you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and commandments, as your father David walked, then I will prolong your days.”

Philippians 3:7-8 – ⁷But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ,

Every choice you make shows that you value one thing above another. You make that choice when you avoid temptation. When you choose to go to church. When you spend time with them. When you spend time with your wife. When you choose them over work.

Spirituality / World View

What is the ultimate source of truth?

Psalms 19:7-12 – ⁷The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. ⁹The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. ¹⁰They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. ¹¹Moreover, by them Thy servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward. ¹²Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults.

Psalms 119:89 – Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven.

Proverbs 3:5 – Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding,

When confronted with a choice between what culture, science, etc., say is true, but contradicts what the Bible says, where do you land?

Who is in charge?

Luke 9:23 – And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

1 Peter 5:6 – Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

Proverbs 29:1 – A man who hardens his neck after much reproof Will suddenly be broken beyond remedy.

Daniel 4:34-37 – ³⁴“But at the end of that period I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. ³⁵And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, ‘What hast Thou done?’ ³⁶At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. ³⁷Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise, exalt, and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.”

John 14:15 – “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

Do your children see you change your mind or choose to do things because God tells you to?

When was the last time you were going in one direction and God intervened – and you changed your direction?

What matters more, this life or eternity?

“What we do in this life echoes in eternity.” – Maximus Decimus Meridius

Matthew 6:19-21 – ¹⁹“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

A parallel passage in Luke:

Luke 12:33 – “Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys.

To the rich young ruler:

Luke 18:22 – And when Jesus heard *this*, He said to him, “One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

Luke 12:16-21 – ¹⁶And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a certain rich man was very productive. ¹⁷And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ ¹⁸And he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years *to come*; take your ease, eat, drink *and* be merry.’” ²⁰But God said to him, ‘You fool! This *very* night your soul is required of you; and *now* who will own what you have prepared?’ ²¹So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

1 Timothy 6:17-19 – ¹⁷Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. ¹⁸Instruct *them* to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

It seems like this is just about money, but it’s really about everything.

1 John 2:15-16 – ¹⁵Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

Hebrews 11:24-26 – ²⁴By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; ²⁵choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; ²⁶considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

Where do your children see you invest your time and money? Does God get the first of it?

Where is your treasure? What are you investing in?

Who is the source of what you have?

Skills?

Exodus 36:1 – “Now Bezalel and Oholiab, and every skillful person in whom the LORD has put skill and understanding to know how to perform all the work in the construction of the sanctuary, shall perform in accordance with all that the LORD has commanded.”

Ministry / Spiritual gifts?

Daniel 2:27-30 – ²⁷Daniel answered before the king and said, “As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians, *nor* diviners are able to declare *it* to the king. ²⁸However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind *while* on your bed. ²⁹As for you, O king, *while* on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place. ³⁰But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind.”

Possessions?

1Co 4:7 – For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

When something great happens in your life, who gets credit?

Is your job the source of your home, food, car, etc.?

Is your spiritual life worth developing?

Psalms 63:1 – O God, Thou art my God; I shall seek Thee earnestly; **My soul thirsts for Thee, my flesh yearns for Thee**, In a dry and weary land where there is no water.

Psalms 119:11 – **Thy word I have treasured in my heart**, That I may not sin against Thee.

Psalms 119:97 – **O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day.**

Psalms 84:10 – **For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand *outside***. I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God, Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

How often would your children say you pray and read your Bible?

Do you carry your spirituality into your public life?

Daniel 2:27-30 – ²⁷Daniel answered before the king and said, “As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians, *nor* diviners are able to declare *it* to the king. ²⁸However, **there is a God in heaven** who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind *while* on your bed.”

Do your children see you acting the same at church and with your friends?

Marriage

This section unintentionally left blank.

Financial

This section unintentionally left blank.

Conclusion:

Pr 17:6 Grandchildren are the **crown** of old men, And the glory of sons is their fathers.

A father's legacy is relevant to us today in at least two very important ways. Of course, one way is very obvious; many of the men in the room are or will be fathers at some point in their lives. Second, every single one of us has had a father, who influenced our lives dramatically and permanently, even if by their absence.

We all have to decide what we are going to do with our fathers' influence. None of them could have been perfect, so even the best fathers will leave some less than perfect influence. In every case, we have to decide what from our fathers was positive and what was negative, and then choose to receive and use what was good, and set aside what was unhelpful or even damaging.