

# A Father that Changes the World (F-A-T-H-E-R)

**Bible Text:** Isaiah 64:8

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Father's Day 2008

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**Introduction:** This morning I want to talk to you about the legacy of a father. Why is the state of the family deteriorating so rapidly in America? One main reason is because of neglectful fathers. We read in **Isaiah 64:8**, "But now, O LORD, thou *art* our father; we *are* the clay, and thou our potter; and we all *are* the work of thy hand."

It is Father's Day, and a father is a molder. Like a potter, he forms the clay of his children in his hands. A potter has power over the clay. In the same way, God has given fathers an amazing opportunity to form the children in his home.

How can the fathers, the heads of households in our congregation form our sons and daughters so that our great grandchildren are more fervent for Christ than we?

I want to show you how we can change the world by using the acronym F-A-T-H-E-R.

- I. A father is a **Fence** for his family. "**F**" - stands for **Fence** of the home.
  - A. First, the father is to be a protector or a fence for his **wife**. If you want to be a great dad, then you need to love your wife. Satan will do everything he can do to destroy your marriage, because if your marriage is destroyed, there is an extremely high probability that you will lose your children to the world. If you cannot maintain your marriage, how can you ever hope to train your children in godliness.
    1. It is the husband's responsibility to put a FENCE around the **intimacy** of his marriage. He is to love her and to give himself only to her. No one else is allowed inside that fence, not in any way, not even in your thoughts. Every expression of marital intimacy outside of the marriage covenant is a sin against God.

Pornography is a growing problem in our culture. With the instant access of the internet, even professing Christian men have fallen into the trap. God's ideal is that you direct all of your energy for marital intimacy (including thoughts) towards your spouse.

- **Hebrews 13:4**, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but **whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.**"
- Jesus said in **Matthew 5:27-28**, "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath **committed adultery** with her already in his heart" (cf. **Exodus 20:14**).

- Don't be fooled. Adultery will destroy your life forever, **Proverbs 6:26, 32-33**, "For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. 32 But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. 33 A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.".
- Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**: "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, ... shall inherit the kingdom of God".
- **Song of Solomon 4:12-15** tells us that the intimacy of a woman is "sealed" up for her spouse—that is her husband alone.

As a husband and a father, there better be a FENCE around your marriage. You cannot let in any intruders! Wives the best way you can keep the fence strong is to keep your husband satisfied with you. Keep his cup full.

If you do not have a spouse, then you must remain chaste.

The key to sexual purity for all people is found in **Proverbs 4:23**, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life". Fornication begins in the heart and mind. Men, if you are married you must reserve 100% of your thoughts and your intimate desires for your wife!

The Lord is very clear in **1 Thessalonians 4:3-5**, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel [CONTROL HIS BODY] in sanctification and honour; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence [UNBRIDLED PASSION], even as the Gentiles which know not God".

2. He protects her **emotionally**. **1 Peter 3:7**, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."
  - a. To protect her she needs your **Consideration**, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge". It is our job as husbands to be the emotional support to our wives. That means we need to COMMUNICATE a whole lot with our wife. We need to laugh daily with our wife. We need to listen to her heart aches. We don't need to solve everything. She just wants a listening ear. You need to CARE about her. You are to LOVE her as Christ loved the church. Husbands, is your wife truly fulfilled in your marriage. If she is not, you need to look in the mirror!
  - b. To protect her she needs your **Care**. Paul goes on to say we are to be "giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel," A lady is the weaker vessel. It does not mean she is less refined, in fact, it means she is more refined. She is like an expensive vase. She needs extreme care and gentleness.
  - c. Finally to protect your wife she needs your **Communion**. The verse ends by saying, "and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." Though women are in general physically weaker than men, we

are spiritual equals. Husband and wife are joint heirs "together of the grace of life". If you are not considerate and caring for your wife, then your communion with God is hindered. In other words, if you can't pray with your wife, then you can't pray to God alone! If there is a breach in the husband-wife relationship, it in effect closes the windows of heaven!

Is your wife safe and protected by you? Are you a fence for her, or she exposed to all the dangers that you should be protecting her from?

So the father is a fence for his wife.

B. Secondly, the father is also a protective fence for his **children**.

A father is to be a fence or a protector not only for his wife, but also for his children. We have a fence in our back yard. It not only gives the children boundaries and keeps them safe from getting out into things that would harm them, but it also keeps bad things from getting in. According to **Ephesians 6:4**, this is the *father's* responsibility. Turn there if you would.

**Transition:** The father is a protective fence for his *children*. This protective fence is both positive and negative. We are going to look at the positive first.

1. There is **positive** protection which the Bible calls **nurture**. Fathers are given the specific responsibility for this positive protection of children in **Ephesians 6:4**, "ye fathers...bring them up in the **nurture** and admonition of the Lord". This is teaching the children the boundaries of the fence and how they are to live and worship God inside the fence. We all know that there are boundaries that are safe for children. When we think our child is in the back yard, we don't want him down the street at the pool hall.

a. Make sure the right kinds of influences are **inside** the fence. There is freedom and fun inside the fence. But we all know to be safe there has to be limits, and limits are good. Begin with the Ten Commandments. Every child in this church should know God's Law backward and forward. The moral law of God shows us God's holy character and how best to operate under His Lordship and control over our lives. Nurturing is teaching our children how to live under the protection of God. An earthly father is simply a representative of the Heavenly Father. It is wonderful to live under God's authority. He is loving and wants and knows what is best for us. The world and the devil are both selfish and do not care about our children. We must live under God's loving and tender authority.

b. Be **careful** what you allow inside the fence. I would never let a strange dog inside our yard and walk away. If there was a dog I didn't know, I would keep him on a leash and keep my eye on him at all times. The moment I saw it lurch toward a child I would make sure that dog was outside of my yard and not allowed back in.

We must have the same care with the souls of our children. Your children are being lunged at with ungodly influences: TV, school, peers. Are you protecting your children? Are you walking away or ignoring those things that can steal your child's soul for eternity? Fathers, it is your responsibility to make sure the wrong influences don't get inside the fence!

**Illustration/Application:** If we left our children to play in the medicine cabinet, we would be irresponsible. Do you know if your children are in dangerous or poisonous environments? I wonder if God would charge us at times with being a spiritually unfit and neglectful parent.

The father has the specific duty to protect his children. Know what's on the TV. Know what is going on at school. You had better be careful who your children are with at all times. Fathers, you are the gatekeepers. Don't walk away from the gate. Don't close your eyes to what gets in the gate.

- II. A father is the **Admonisher** for his family. **A** – stands for **Admonisher** of the home. There is also negative protection, or what the Bible calls **admonition**. This is literally a “warning, correction, exhortation, and at times rebuke”.

**Illustration:** Warnings are life saving mechanisms! We are all thankful for tornado sirens that keep us from harm. On our van we have a motion sensor that beeps and warns us when we are going in reverse if we are going to hit something. Warnings are good! We need to warn our children jump the fences we put up. If our children wander too far outside the fence they could find themselves in very dangerous territory. A child could wander into the street and get hit by a car. It would be unloving not to warn a child who is headed straight for danger.

There needs to be firmness in correcting a wandering child. This brings up the issue of discipline.

- A. **What** method of correction should the parent use? Verbal rebuke? Time outs? Grounding? Corporeal punishment? All of the above? Some secular “experts” insist that all forms of physical punishment will hurt the psyche of a child. Some even say that parents should never use any kind of negative reinforcement with children—they say positive reinforcement alone is enough.

The Bible says otherwise. “The Bible prescribes corporeal punishment, and says it is a necessary element of parental love.”<sup>1</sup> **Proverbs 13:24**, “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” **Proverbs 23:13** tells us very clearly, “Withhold not correction from the child”. We read in **Hebrews 12:6**, “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” If you love your children and want to reflect the love of God to them, you will set up clear boundaries and warn them and correct them when they cross those boundaries.

- B. **How** should I use corporeal punishment?

1. Discipline should be **consistent**. As I have said, we have one rule in our home. There must be complete, immediate, obedience with a happy attitude. **Ephesians 6:4** is careful to teach us that it is the father's duty to admonish. Mother can carry it out as she spends most of the time with the children, but it is the *father's responsibility to make sure that it is truly taking place CONSISTENTLY*. “Let your yea be yea and your nay be nay” (**Matthew 5:37**).

Some parents count to three before they will correct a child. That teaches the child they can disobey for two and a half counts before they need to obey. A child needs to obey 1. **immediately**, 2. **completely**, and 3. **sweetly**, or with a

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur. *The Fulfilled Family*, 118-119.

happy attitude. Your children should know this by heart. Every time they disobey you, you should ask them, "How should you obey?" And they should respond, "immediately, completely, and with a happy attitude".

2. Discipline should be **fair**. The punishment should fit the crime. Any time there is willful defiance it should be dealt with using corporeal punishment. What is willful defiance? Willful defiance is any time a child does not obey immediately, completely, and with a happy attitude. Certainly any time a child throws a fit, any time the child hits, or pouts they are willfully defiant. If a three year old child is told by his mother to eat his carrots, the child might tenderly say, "yes sir" or "yes m'am" and pick up their fork and eat their carrots. If the child looks to father with a frown sympathy, that is defiance.

A child should never be punished for being childish. A parent should be very careful to realize when the child's schedule is turned upside down. If you are on vacation or traveling and a child is uncharacteristically sensitive or cranky, it may be that the parent is not allowing the child enough sleep, or that the child is uncomfortable outside of his home environment. Give a lot of grace during these times. Never punish a child who has been careless with the same rigor as one who has been overtly defiant.

3. Finally, remember that the majority of your training should be **positive** reinforcement. There should be a lot of love and praise for the children when they do what is right. Think about how you like to be treated. You like praise. You love it when someone notices your hard work. Take every chance you can to praise and love on your children. If you are training your children right, corporeal punishment may be necessary at first, but it will get less and less by the time the children are school age.

III. A father is the **Trainer** for his family. "T" stands for "Trainer" in the home. **Ephesians 6:4**, "ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord". The phrase "bring them up" means simply to train the children.

**Illustration:** Think of the great athletes and how they train for the Olympic Games. They go over their routine tens of thousands of times so they get it just right. That is what the father is called to do. He is to train his children. Let me give you some practical ways the father can be his children's personal trainer.

A. Teach and mould through nourishment and admonishment.

**Isaiah 64:8**, "But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand." How can you mold the clay of your children's life and soul? We are talking about the spiritual formation of our children! How can we end up with something that is the work of God's hands? How can we be an instrument that God can use to mold our children?

1. In order to train and mold our children, you've got to dedicate a great amount of **time** in family worship. You want enough influence on them that they've heard everything not just from the preacher, but first and foremost from YOU, their father. This also goes for single moms. Come back tonight and we will develop this point. I'm going to talk about the need and develop a plan for family worship.

2. But let me say this, it is possible to teach your children, but to **Fail** as a parent. Don't just teach your children about prayer. Pray with them! Don't just teach them about kindness. Be kind to them. Don't just teach them about keeping your word. Always keep your word to them and to others.
3. You cannot **Delegate** your responsibility to Train Your Children.
  - School.
  - Church.
  - Other family members.
4. *The Best thing the Church can do is to prepare fathers to be spiritual leaders in the home. This is more valuable than any youth program!*

B. Reach the heart through your example. There is a real sense in which we are all *home schoolers*. **Deuteronomy 6:6-7**, "these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up". We must teach and live *coram deo*—in the face of God, 24-7! Our consistency and genuine spiritual life will be what ensures the best opportunity for conversion in our children.

The primary dispenser of truth for your children is NOT the pastor! The pastor and the church reinforce YOUR TEACHING. If there is no serious-minded, dedicated teaching in the home, your child sees a hypocrisy, and many times will scorn the truth and sadly at times turn away from it. If you are hit and miss with church and have no teaching in the home, your child is in danger.

What your child needs to see in the home is consistent teaching and living out of the Word of God and a deep love and respect. There needs to be a:

1. Love and respect for **God**
2. Love and respect for your **wife**
3. Love and respect for the **children** themselves

All three are accomplished with a great investment of **Time**, a careful and consistent use of your **Tone of Voice**, and a consistent **Testimony** of genuine godliness and Christianity before your children.

**One Caveat:** Understand there is no perfect parent. Ultimately, we need be a channel for the grace of God for our child. It is God and God alone that will save our children. But we must do all we can to be a vessel and ambassador of His grace.

God has given you fathers the duty of training your children. If you've derailed, get back on track. Start wherever you left off. Start immediately! Father, you are the Trainer in your home!

- IV. A father is the **Head** of his family. "**H**" stands for "Head" or the Leader of the home. The man is given the authority in the home. The Bible tells us that the man is the head of the home. Now this does not mean he is a dictator. He is given a great power that he must use gently. We know the best leader is the one who is well loved and respected and looked up to. He is to be a servant leader. The man exercises loving headship.

**1 Corinthians 11:3**, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

**Ephesians 5:23-25**, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it".

**1 Timothy 2:11-13**, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. 15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety".

The fall has had a terrible effect on marriage (**Genesis 3:16**).

**Ecclesiastes 7:20**, "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."

1. Women desire to usurp male headship in the home (**Genesis 4:7**).
2. Men become domineering and abusive.
3. God's design for marriage has been twisted in countless ways.

This idea of male headship is counter cultural. Dad is to be the primary bread winner in the home so mother can be a "keeper at home". Dad, if you are passive, you are in sin!

- V. A father is the **Encourager** of his family. "**E**" stands for "Encourager" of the home. Nothing is more powerful in a home than a firm but cheerful father. **Ephesians 6:4** tells us specifically, "fathers, provoke not your children to wrath". Fathers are given a God given authority. That authority is like a chain saw. If it is used in the wrong way it can do almost irreparable damage.

Children are rebellious by nature from birth. Fathers need to use their God-given authority to mold his children.

A. Don't neglect them. I Sam. 2:12-17,22-25 3:13 4:11 I Kings 1:5-6 II Sam. 14:24

1. Lack of discipline. Pr. 19:18 I Sam. 3:13
2. Lack of love. Ps. 103:13-14
3. Lack of understanding: Not all children are the same. Mt. 21:28-31

B. Twenty-five ways parents provoke their children to anger (from Lou Priolo).

1. Lack of marital harmony. Genesis 2:24 Heb. 12:15
2. Maintaining a child-centered home. Pr. 29:15 II Ti. 3:1-2
3. Modeling sinful anger. Prov. 22:24-25 Js. 1:19-20 Mt. 5:21-23 Ro. 12:1f Ps. 38:1
4. Habitually disciplining while angry. Ps. 38:1 Gal. 6:1 Heb. 12:5-10 I Th. 2:3f
5. Scolding. Eph. 4:29
6. Being inconsistent with discipline. II Co. 1:17-18 Ecc. 8:11
7. Having double standards. Phil. 4:9
8. Being legalistic. Mt. 15:8-9
9. Not admitting you are wrong and not asking for forgiveness. Mt. 5:23-24 Js. 5:16
10. Constantly finding fault. Job 32:2-3 Pr. 19:11
11. Parents reversing God-given roles. Eph. 5:22-30

12. Not listening to your child's opinion or taking his/her side of the story seriously.  
Prov. 18:3,17 20:5 Eph. 4:25 Js. 1:19
13. Comparing them to others. II Co. 10:12 .
14. Not making time just to talk. Js. 1:19 Pr. 20:5
15. Not praising or encouraging your child. Rev. 2-4 I Co. 1:1f Col. 3:21
16. Failing to keep your promises. Mt. 5:37 Ps. 15:4 Col. 3:9
17. Chastening them in front of others. Mt. 18:15
18. Not allowing enough freedom. Lu. 12:48 I Co. 13:11
19. Allowing too much freedom. Pr. 29:15 Gal. 4:1-2 .
20. Mocking your child. Job 17:1-2
21. Abusing them physically. I Ti. 3:3 Num. 22:27-29
22. Ridicule or name calling. Eph. 4:29
23. Unrealistic expectations. I Co. 13:11 I Th. 2:11
24. Practicing favoritism. Luke 15:25-30
25. Child training with worldly methods instead of God's Word. Eph. 6:4 Pr. 3:5-6

C. Fathers, we need the tone of our leadership in the home should be overwhelmingly positive! How do you like to be talked to?

VI. A father finally is the **Role-Model** for his family. "R" stands for "Role-Model" of the home. God is our heavenly father. We are to model His love. **Proverbs 17:6**, "Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers". Your goal is not your children, but your children's children. You are aiming at your grandchildren! Are you thinking of yourself of a large godly family? Are you fathers thinking of yourself as the patriarch, or are you just counting the days until retirement?

**Conclusion:** Are you a father that truly changes your child's focus from his self to God? Then you are a father that changes the world.

What better way to conclude today than with the dedication of a child to the Lord's service? I'm going to ask Jeff and Cindy Babineau to come on up here with their newest son, Bryce Thomas Babineau.