

Introduction to Family Shepherds Men's Study (11/3/2012)

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Proverbs 27:17 *Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another.*

Hebrews 10:24 *and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*

My desire for this group is that we would be considering how we might stimulate each other, stir one another up towards love and good in our families, that these times would be a catalyst for consideration of specific men in this church and in your life, as to how God might have you to encourage them, seeking iron-sharpening relationships.

I'm very encouraged that we're starting this study because this is a subject I want to learn about and to learn with you and learn from you. As I said in my email this week that most of you got, none of us have this "family shepherding" thing all figured out (as you'll realize in this study if you don't already :) I welcome the help of our brother Voddie and brothers in this group by way of input and feedback, as "iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." Without this we remain dull. When metal strikes metal, sometimes sparks fly, but it's also this process that sharpens us. Interacting over biblical truth is what the biblical word fellowship (*koinonia*) means and I look forward to iron-sharpening fellowship

I'm also very encouraged by how many are interested in this type of study, and by how many people have asked me in recent weeks and months questions about leading their wives and children, and questions about family devotions, books and resources, etc. I was encouraged when I taught on Ephesians 6:4 a few weeks ago how a number of you commented on how convicting God's Word is to dads there in their role to teach Scripture to and lead their family in the instruction of the Lord. I'm convicted and comforted that God seems to be doing a work in the hearts of many men to be family shepherds as fathers and husbands. I was blessed to grow up in a home where my father modeled many of these things, led us in the Word, in family devotions, disciplined me lovingly, and I count myself blessed to have my dad be my hero and such an example.

But he would tell you he wasn't the perfect dad, and I will tell you, I am nowhere close to being a perfect dad or husband, and we can't look to even the best dads in this room ultimately. We need to look to the only perfect Father in heaven and the perfect Shepherd Jesus. Voddie writes:

'It has been said that as goes the family, so goes the world. It can also be said that as goes the father, so goes the family. The role of men in their families is so important that God honored it by conferring upon us his own title, Father. We're the governors and guides of our families, and the way we lead has far-reaching implications.

Over the past several years, I've thought, written, taught, and labored long and hard over the issue of male leadership in the home. I've watched families crumble under the weight of paternal neglect. I've seen young men wander aimlessly, looking for answers their fathers should have given them in both word and deed.

And I've grieved with Christian women who've grown weary of begging God to make their husbands the spiritual leaders of their homes. I've also seen men wake up to the responsibility and privilege of being their family's shepherd. I've watched households transform quickly as father take the helm and begin to lead and disciple their wives and children. I've seen marriages healed as husbands begin to take seriously their duty to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25) and to raise their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

This is the kind of transformation to which I desire to contribute. I want to help men overcome a legacy of passivity, incompetence, and indifference. I want to help shape the thinking of a generation of fathers who embrace their role with a certain amount of fear and trembling while carrying out their tasks with faith and confidence.

In short, I want to answer the question I've received from hundreds, if not thousands, of men: *How do I lead my family?* This is merely one beggar's effort to tell other beggars where he found bread." (*Family Shepherds*, Crossway Books, 2011, p. 11-12).

We're all beggars and slaves (as we learned we are last Sunday) and as brothers and soldiers (you'll hear more about tomorrow).

Today: Discipleship of Men toward Discipleship in Families

You've probably heard of the fighter pilots crashing as they followed the lead F-16. It reminds us of the impact of leadership

- I have had the privilege of other godly men in my life discipling and leading me to where I needed to go, formally and informally
- I don't have this all figured out, but I've had the privilege of being able to disciple men myself, and as a pastor I've recently had numerous conversations with men as to how to be a better leader spiritually, which I'm happy to pursue w/ them
- Our men's ministry at our church is trying to re-focus on leading men to be leaders of their homes -> our goal is disciple-making, to make disciple-makers of other men who repeat the process, who will also be doing the same in their homes. The 4 Elders we have can't disciple everybody in the church one-on-one, but if men can be equipped to disciple the members of their families, not only is that far more practical, I believe it's also a more biblical model. I'm thankful for men who led me to be a leader, and pray we can do the same for others

KEY PASSAGES AS STARTING POINTS:

Colossians 1:28 *We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.*

Note the repeated "every man" and specific strategic goal (to present complete/mature in Christ)

Matthew 28:19 *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

Note 2 Timothy 2:2 applies that to making disciples who are disciple-makers who repeat process

DISCUSS: How these verses apply to what takes place outside a church corporate worship service, with men among men, and with a man among his wife and children?

As you turn to Titus 2, I would remind you that Titus and Timothy are 2 men Paul disciplined who have NT books named after them. Both men Paul led to be leaders in Ephesus and Crete, and both men Paul instructed to be reproducing themselves spiritually, with other faithful men who could take what they had learned from their discipleship relationship with Paul, to in turn have discipleship relationships with other men, discipling them to be disciple-makers

My prayer for this group is to stimulate fellowship and relationships among men from which I pray you will pursue the discipleship of your family. I'm thankful to see young and old, married and unmarried here, as we all need each other in a church family.

Titus 1:5-9 specifically is about elder leadership but then Titus 2:2 talks about older men (different general term not for officers of the church, just older members) and how they are to lead by example. If you're taking notes, the #1 way men should lead is by example:

Titus 2:2 (NASB95) *Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance ...*

⁶ *Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; ⁷ in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, ⁸ sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.*

What age or stage of life is an “older men” versus “young men”? Philo, a Jewish writer who lived close to NT times, used this Greek word translated “older men” in v. 2 to refer to men aged 49 to 56. Some would say v. 2 refers to “middle age” and older.¹ Irenaeus the church father said one was “young” until the age of 40,² but since Scripture doesn't give us a magic number, I think it's better to just stick with the words “older” and “younger” (also used in v. 3-4), and bear in mind that Paul may also have *spiritual maturity* in view, rather than just chronological years or a precise age range.

Few of you like to admit that you're “older,” but most all of you are “older” than others (physically and/or spiritually) and all of you in this room have people who are older than you or more mature in the Lord, and this term “older” can be used relatively. So perhaps some of you could be an “older man” to someone in this church who you can help disciple, and at the same time you have someone older than you in the faith who can help disciple you. You are not so spiritually mature that you can't have a mature believer disciple you, and if you're *unwilling* to humble yourself to seek and do that, you *especially* need someone to disciple and challenge you!

Physical age and spiritual maturity should go together as Titus 2:2 spells out, but Paul had to write this verse because it doesn't always. It *should be* that all older men are also automatically mature, but unfortunately that's not always the case. We have a world filling with people who have never truly grown up and TV sitcoms may make it look funny, but it's actually sad. And spiritually we also have people that have been around the church many years but are very spiritually immature. Paul had to rebuke the Corinthians for being like that – may he not rebuke us! And may you not become “grumpy old men” but “godly older men.”

Under this first point, there are several ways to lead by example, 3 character traits older men are to exemplify to younger men:

Sober-mindedness: 1st in v. 2 (ESV) for being temperate or sober by avoiding whatever might negatively influence or impair his judgment. The temperate older man is able to discern more clearly which things are of the greatest importance and value. He uses his time, his money, and his energy more carefully and selectively than when he was younger and less mature. His priorities are in the right order, and he is satisfied with fewer and simpler things.³

Seriousness in spiritual things: the next phrase is “dignified” or “reverent” or “worthy of respect,” depending on which version you have. This is the opposite of a clown or goofball. A youthful levity is not to mark mature saints, but instead there is a gravity, sobriety, which results in the next word, being “sensible / self-controlled.”

Soundness in faith, love, and perseverance: The word “sound” means healthy and probably modifies all 3 words which you’re familiar with and probably don’t need those words explained.

⁶ Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; ⁷ in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, ⁸ sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

‘...I’d rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way.
The eye’s a better pupil and more willing than the ear,
Fine counsel [can be] confusing, but example’s always clear;
And the best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds,
For to see good put in action is what everybody needs.

I soon can learn to do it if you’ll let me see it done;
I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run.
And the lecture you deliver may be very wise and true,
But I’d rather get my lessons by observing what you do;
For I might misunderstand you and the high advice you give,
But there’s no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.

When I see a deed of kindness, I am eager to be kind.
When a weaker brother stumbles and a strong man stays behind
Just to see if he can help him, then the wish grows strong in me
To become as big and thoughtful as I know that friend to be.
And all travelers can witness that the best of guides today
Is not the one who tells them, but the one who shows the way.

One good man teaches many, men believe what they behold;
One deed of kindness noticed is worth forty that are told.
Who stands with men of honor learns to hold his honor dear,
For right living speaks a language which to every one is clear.’⁴

Titus 2 highlights both a modeling and mentoring men's ministry. 1st part of leadership is by example, the 2nd part is by exhortation

#1. Lead By Example. #2. Lead By Exhortation

Visually displaying leadership is not enough, there must also be verbal discipleship, model *and* mentor, example *and* exhortation:

⁶ *Likewise urge the young men to be sensible ...*

The word "likewise" connects this verse with what comes before in v. 3-5 about older and younger. In the same way that mature and godly women are to encourage or admonish or train life-on-life the younger women of their priorities in Titus 2:4-5, young men need the same by godly men in their life, as Proverbs 27:17 says "like iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." We all need it.

This is not a passive process. It must be urged (v. 6), or "exhorted" as some of your Bibles may say. The Greek word *parakaleo* comes from two words that literally mean "to come alongside" and "to call" – in other words, *to call to action as you come beside him as a friend, as a brother in the Lord*. It's a stronger word than their word for "ask" – this word is translated in other verses as "entreat" or "implore" or "plead" or even "beg" - the picture of someone in earnest pleading for your attention, "I beg of you, please listen!"

It includes nuances of encouraging and even comforting, and a related word is used as a title for the Holy Spirit, our Comforter. As Spirit-filled believers we are to come alongside to admonish each other, by speaking the truth in love, to our brother in Christ.

J.C. Ryle has written a booklet *Thoughts for Young Men*, which is an oldie but goodie that could be used for this or for father-to-son that I want to read from an older wiser brother in the faith than me⁵

Reasons for Exhorting Young Men

- (1) For one thing, there is the painful fact that there are few young men anywhere who seem to be Christians.
- (2) Death and judgment are waiting for young men, even as it waits for others, and they nearly all seem to forget it.
- (3) What young men will be, in all probability depends on what they are now, and they seem to forget this.
- (4) The devil uses special diligence to destroy the souls of young men, and they don't seem to know it.
- (5) Young men need exhorting because of the sorrow it will save them, to begin serving God now.

Special Dangers Young Men Need to be Warned About

1. Pride
2. Love of pleasure

3. Thoughtlessness
4. Contempt of Christianity
5. Fear of Man's Opinion

General Counsels to Young Men

- (1) Try to get a clear view of the evil of sin.
- (2) Seek to become acquainted with our Lord Jesus Christ.
- (3) Never forget that nothing is so important as your soul.
- (4) Remember it is possible to be a young man and yet to serve God.
- (5) Determine as long as you live to make the Bible your guide and adviser ...

Special Rules for Young Men

1. Resolve at once, by God's help, to break off every known sin, however small.
2. Resolve, by God's help, to shun everything which may prove an occasion of sin.
3. Resolve never to forget the eye of God (study Psalm 139).
4. Be diligent in the practice of your Christianity.
5. Resolve that wherever you are, you will pray.'

¹*The Works of Philo : Complete and Unabridged* (15). Peabody: Hendrickson.

²I. Howard Marshall. *The Pastoral Epistles* (International Critical Commentary, T&T Clark, New York, 2004), p. 239.

³ www.preceptaustin.org

⁴ *Power for Living*, June 22, 2008, SP Publications, Colorado Springs, www.power-for-living.com

⁵ J. C. Ryle, *Thoughts for Young Men*, available from amazon.com or online edition at <http://www.biblebb.com/files/ryle/YOUNGMEN.HTM>