

SERMON OUTLINE

GLORIOUS FATHERS: A FATHERS' DAY MESSAGE (PROVERBS 17:6)

I. A Call to Mature Masculinity

- A. Just as all women are called to be mothers in some way, so all men are called also to be fathers in some way.
—Not necessarily biological fathers, but certainly spiritual fathers (1 Cor 4:15)
- B. We cannot underestimate the importance of talking about fatherhood in our day.
 - 1. Fatherhood and masculinity are still reeling from the feminist-inspired assault of the popular media.
 - 2. There is a need to talk about the importance of fatherhood, because we are living in an increasingly self-absorbed, childish age.
- C. Just as our society despises the calling of women, there is also a sense in which our society despises the calling of real men as well.
 - 1. By rewarding the woman who is pushy and aggressive, our society despises true feminine beauty.
 - 2. By rewarding the same kinds of men, our society ends up despising real manhood as well.
- D. A key element of mature masculinity lies in the notion of *fatherhood*, because fatherhood is who God is.
- E. We will be looking at a passage—Proverbs 17:6—that touches on the purpose of fatherhood, and therefore, of masculinity.
 - 1. Proverbs 17:6 does not say everything that needs to be said about mature masculinity.
 - 2. But it does show us that when men start functioning as the fathers God has called us to be, we will become God's gift of glory to our covenant children, and those younger men or women God brings into our lives.
- F. Women in the church, this is now your turn to encourage your husbands or your brothers in Christ.
—Unless we have your encouragement to be the kind of men God wants us to be, we will continue in immaturity.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) “Just as all women are called to be mothers in some way, so all men are called also to be fathers in some way.” Discuss. (2) Why is fatherhood a key aspect of mature masculinity? (3) How can you, a woman in the Church, encourage your brothers in Christ to be mature men?

II. The Context of Proverbs 17:6

- A. According to the Old Testament scholar Bruce Waltke, this passage is part of a larger section of proverbs that begins in 16:31:
—“Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life.”
- B. Proverbs 16:31, teaches us that age is an honorable thing.
1. The gray hairs of an older man or woman are his or her crown of glory.
 2. And yet, the author of Proverbs teaches us that living to a ripe old age is itself the result of a good and righteous life.
 3. This does not mean...
 - a. that the righteous will always live to be old.
 - b. ...that every older person is righteous.
 4. But it is to say that, ordinarily speaking, righteous living will keep you healthy and long-lived.
—If you live your life under the rule of God, God will bless you.
- C. The implication of this verse is twofold.
1. It calls younger people to honor their elders in society.
—This is especially needed given our infatuation with things that are new.
 2. It also calls older people to live up to the glory of their age.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What does Proverbs 16:31 teach us about relating to our elders (parents, grandparents, etc.)? (2) What requirement does Proverbs 16:31 place on our elders?

III. The Crown of the Fathers

- A. After several more proverbs, we return to the theme of the elders’ glory in 17:6.
1. This time, instead of saying that grey hairs are the crown of the aged, it says that “Grandchildren are the crown of the aged...”
 2. 17:6 is offering a slightly different angle on the elders’ glory.
—An older person’s dignity is not only found in his or her years of righteous experience, as 16:31 says. It’s also found in his or her descendents.
- B. Proverbs 17:6 is stating a universal cultural fact—grandparents take pride in their grandkids!
- C. But since grandparents are themselves parents, this verse also invites us to see that children are the glory of their fathers.
1. Psalm 127:3-5: “Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one’s youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!...”
 2. Children, whether biological or spiritual, can be likened to the credentials of a man.

- D. Proverbs is giving us a part of the biblical vision of manhood here. Who is the ideal man according to God’s Word?
1. He is one who gives life to others.
 2. Based on the example of our Lord Jesus, who did not have biological children of his own, we know this giving of life is not necessarily biological, but it is also spiritual.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) Proverbs 17:6 offers a slightly different angle on the elders’ glory. How does it complement Proverbs 16:31? (2) How does the example of our Lord Jesus show us that the notion of fatherhood is not limited merely to biological fatherhood?

IV. The Glory of the Young

- A. And then comes the next part of our verse: “...the glory of children is their fathers.”
- B. The theme of glory appears again.
- C. This time, it’s not the glory of the elder, but the glory of the younger.
- D. Just as children are the glory of their elders, elders—specifically fathers—are the glory of their children.

***Questions for reflection:** Proverbs 17:6 shows us that God bestows dignity on our younger ones as well. What does this say about God’s care for the younger or weaker in society? How does this challenge the notion that only the elders/superiors should be respected? (2) Who is “the glory of children”?

V. A Key Element of Godly Masculinity

- A. We are given a glimpse of a central element in mature masculinity.
—*It’s the giving of oneself to others.*
- B. While this is not the only element of mature masculinity, it is certainly a key part.
1. To be a mature man in God’s estimation is to be a servant of the younger.
 2. Specifically, it is to serve the younger *as* their glory.

VI. The Meaning of Glory

- A. In Proverbs 17:6, “glory” means “splendor.”
—“Glory” is associated with concepts like honor, dignity, majesty, and royalty.
- B. Therefore, to say that fathers are the glory of their children is to say that they are the honor, dignity, and majesty of their children.
- C. While it’s universally true that grandchildren are the pride of their grandparents, it comes as a surprise that parents are also the pride of their children.

D. God cares for the glory of the old as well as the young.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What does “glory” mean in Proverbs 17:6? (2) What does it mean, therefore, to say that fathers are the glory of their children?

VII. Obedience for the Sake of Our Children

How do fathers function as glory to their own children?

- A. Many would answer this question in terms of wealth, accomplishments, and, providing materially for their children.
—All these things have their place.
- B. The governing principle of Proverbs is in Proverbs 1:7:
—“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, fools despise wisdom and instruction.”
- C. It is when fathers are practicing God’s Word that their children are covered with dignity.
- D. To get even more specific, we can trace a broad outline of the righteous man by looking at the Ten Commandments.
 - 1. Based on the First to Fourth Commandments, the righteous man is one who...
 - a. has given his allegiance to the Lord God (Ex 20:3)
 - b. worships the Lord according to his Word (Ex 20:4)
 - c. honors the Name of the Lord (20:7)
 - d. honors the Lord’s special Day (20:8).
 - 2. Based on the Fifth to the Tenth Commandments, the righteous man is one who...
 - a. honors his own parents and other God-given authorities (20:12)
 - b. values life (20:13)
 - c. is sexually pure (20:14)
 - d. respects the rights and properties of others (20:15)
 - e. lives with truthfulness and integrity (20:16)
 - f. is contented with God in all of life (20:17).
- E. But godly fatherhood also requires an *other*-focused approach to holiness.
 - 1. We often think of obedience in self-focused terms. (e.g. “My personal walk with God.”)
 - 2. But the righteous father also keeps God’s Word with an eye to his children.
 - 3. This is what makes fathers the glory of their children
—They obey God because the honor of their children is at stake.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How would many in our society answer the question: How do fathers function as glory to their children? (2) Since the fear of the Lord is a major principle in Proverbs, how would Proverbs want us to understand how fathers function as glory to their children? (3) “The righteous

father also keeps God’s Word with an eye to his children.” What does this mean? Discuss.

VIII. Christian Masculinity and Its Opponents

- A. We can see how this biblical vision of fatherhood and masculinity opposes the visions of masculinity that we see today.
- B. First, it opposes *the feminist-inspired assault on manhood*.
 - 1. Many feminist types seem bent on blaming major social problems on masculinity.
 - 2. But these people are attacking the wrong issue.
—True manhood—the kind that is defined by God’s Word—is not the arrogant, abusive, self-centered masculinity that feminism attacks.
 - 3. Feminism is really attacking an immature, even sinful, version of masculinity.
 - 4. According to Proverbs 17, the righteous man can only bring good to his family.
- C. Second, it opposes *the self-centered, childish spirit of many men in our day*.
 - 1. Being a man is not about aggressiveness and getting your own way.
 - 2. At the end of the day, it’s about servanthood—being good for the good of others.
 - 3. It is only when we are already committed to the good of our children that the more aggressive aspects of masculinity can safely emerge.
 - a. The godly alternative to the pushy, aggressive male is not the sissy, the moral coward.
 - b. It is the righteous man who fights for the good of others, especially the younger ones God has entrusted to him.
 - c. The righteous man also fights with the spiritual weapons of God—Scripture and prayer.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What problems does Biblical, godly manhood answer? (2) How does the Proverbs 17 man counter feminism? (3) How does the Proverbs 17 man counter the self-centeredness man-child of our age?

IX. Christ Jesus, the True Glory of Our Children

- A. But all fathers will fail at one point or another.
—None of us have ever had perfect fathers.
- B. We should also expect our children to see our flaws (based on Scripture!) and strive not to repeat them in their own families.
- C. Given that we break each point of God’s Law so often, how can we still bestow glory on our children?
 - 1. We do so by trusting in the One who has kept the Law, our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 2. Romans 10:4: “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

- Christ is where we attain the righteousness that the Law requires.
- D. In the end, our Lord Jesus fulfils Proverbs 17:6—he is the ultimate glory of our children.
1. The most treasured inheritance we can give our kids is not our money or even our good example—it’s our Lord Jesus Christ!
 2. Behind Proverbs 17:6 is the call of Matthew 19:14: —“Let the little children come to me...”
- E. We bring our children to Christ by...
1. teaching them the Scriptures, especially the Gospel.
 - a. You haven’t taught the Gospel just by teaching the Ten Commandments or good moral principles from Proverbs.
 - b. You teach the Gospel by showing how we do not follow God’s Law but that Christ fulfilled the Law for us.
 2. praying for them—“Lord, have mercy on my child.”
 3. acknowledging to them that we too need a Savior.
 - a. Don’t let your parenting get in the way of the Gospel.
 - b. Instead, let your parenting guide your child to Jesus.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How would you characterize your father? Was he someone you were generally proud of? Was he someone you would generally not like to emulate? (2) Will you give your child the freedom to evaluate you based on Scripture? (3) Given that we break God’s Law, how can we still bestow glory on our children? (4) How do we bring our children to Jesus Christ?

VII. A Call for God-Fearing, Christ-Offering Men

Brothers, God calls us to be his gift of glory to our younger generations, both at home and in the church. This requires us to reject the immature visions of manhood that society imposes on us, and choosing mature manhood in Jesus Christ.

How do we bestow glory on our children? We do so by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our righteousness; by conforming our lives to Christ for the sake of our children; and by offering Christ himself to them.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) Man of the Church, are you looking to God for your purpose in the world? Or are you buying into the world’s “immature visions of manhood”? Where are you more like the World? (2) How do Christian men bestow glory on their children? (3) Where do you need to grow to become more mature in Christ? (4) How are you serving the younger ones in our Church? How do you wish they can learn from you? What biblical traits do you want them to emulate? What sinful attitudes or behaviors do you want them to reject?