



June 15, 2014  
1 Thessalonians 2:10-13  
Pastor Larry Adams

## What's a Father to Do?

If you have your Bibles, I'd like you to turn with me if you would to 1 Thessalonians Chapter 2. We're gonna be continuing on from our Mother's Day message in the same passage. It goes on to describe not only how moms are to be nurturing amongst their own children, but how fathers are to deal with their children as well as the apostle Paul shares with us some principles that I think can help encourage all of us today on Father's Day.

You know, guys, I feel like you a lot probably in the fact that I didn't know how to do this when I came into it. We aren't trained to be husbands and dads for the most part. Sometimes the examples we've been given aren't the best. We need to learn this as we go. That was me. I'm having to learn it and still am, but I want you to know that people like the apostle Paul are great teachers. They had become role models for me. What's interesting is Paul was never married, had no natural children of his own that we know of, but he had a lot of spiritual kids. He was a father to them in every way that matters. Today, as we look at this, I hope it will be a great encouragement as we learn together another example of what fathers are to do. This is what Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 2 verse 10:

You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. <sup>11</sup> For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, <sup>12</sup> encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

<sup>13</sup> And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

Let's pray for a moment.

*Lord, these words are so encouraging. They are challenging, but they are encouraging. Paul was not equipped to do any of this either, and yet you used him powerfully and effectively to be a spiritual father to thousands of people whose lives were deeply impacted by his example. By having you share with us how he lived among them, it gives all of us examples of what fathers can be today. So, Lord, may you encourage us as men, and may we find in you all the strength we need to rise up and be the men you've called us to be and we'll thank you, God. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

When I went out this morning to come to church, the paper was in the driveway. I picked it up, opened it up, and inside first thing that hit me was this: "Do It All Dads." I thought, Oh, great, another one of these articles that tells me where I'm falling short. The subtitle was "Modern-Day Fathers Make the Most of Their Family Roles." This is what it said:

Dads aren't what they used to be --

That's encouraging.

and that that may be for the best. Mostly gone are the days of Ward Cleaver working all day to make ends meet while wife June stays home.

By the way, if you don't know who that is, I can't help you. You gotta Google it or something and it tells me how young you are – or maybe not. It's only a few old people who know who that is. Anyway:

while June stays home, looking great, refereeing Wally and the Beaver, and hustling to make sure Ward's dinner is on the table when he gets home. In 2014, Ward might be the one making dinner, shuffling kids to school and back, and trying to get some work done while keeping the house in order. Men still provide, but chances are better than ever that mom's bringing home the bacon while dad fries it up in a pan. Dads are now expected to handle as much of the domestic side as moms. Somewhere along the way that became the norm.

You know, when I read that this morning I thought, That became the norm? Well, what is the norm? Roles change over the years. There are very few Ward and June Cleavers left. The world is a different place. A lot of times it takes two incomes to make things work. Many times dad isn't the highest breadwinner. Domestic chores should always have been shared in some role or another, but as roles change it can leave a father asking, What is a man to do? What is a father to do?

Well, as I shared with you before, I came into this not knowing myself what to do, certainly not from a Christian perspective. So I've been learning the whole way. It's why I love to be around other guys that are learning too. One of the things I've learned is that there is a role that's unchanging, given to all men who are husbands and fathers regardless of their life stage. It's a role that will never change because it was given by God. It is the responsibility of a man to lead, to lead his family, to understand how God has designed life and family and the kingdom of God to work, and how in this world we are to walk with God.

That's what the apostle Paul did for the church at Thessalonica and so many other churches where he had so many spiritual children. He taught the people how to walk with God. Paul lived among these churches he said, "Like a father among his children," in verse 11:

For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children

We shared with you before in our teaching in 1 Thessalonians and again on Mother's Day that this was a church that had a high chance of failure. Founded by Paul and his companions on his second missionary journey, they came into a community that had not heard about Christ. There were no other churches. They had no Bibles. Paul had as little as three weeks to lead these people to Christ and to teach them the foundations of Christianity, then he and his companions were chased out of town leaving behind a fledgling church.

Churches today with so many more resources, so many places to turn, so many leadership examples to come after have a hard time succeeding as well as the church of Thessalonica did. They became a church whose impact and faith and hope and love was known over the Empire. People seeing that wonder, How in the world could this happen. How could this be? How could a church that normally wouldn't even survive under severe persecution with such a short training time, how could they thrive and become the people they were? Well, it was the grace of God and a powerful example.

Last month on Mother's Day we learned how Paul said, "I was like a nurturing mom amongst you and her infant children." Now, he says, "I'm like a dad," verse 10:

You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. <sup>11</sup> For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, <sup>12</sup> encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

<sup>13</sup> And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

He led them as a father leader, and the example Paul left has become a model of what all fathers are called to do. Fathers are called to lead their families to walk with God. How are we to do this? Along with the many other responsibilities that come with nurturing and providing for our families, Paul pointed to two indispensable things that every father needs to do. He said, "We need to live a life of godly character and to live a life worthy of God." Fathers are called to lead their families to live a life of godly character. Paul said in verse 10:

You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.

This last week, I was reading an excerpt from a newspaper in Utah called *The Deseret News*. It was telling about a man named Josh Ferrin, a local man there from Bountiful, Utah, who had just closed on the first home he could buy for his family. Apparently he either bought it at auction or something because when he closed he got the keys and was going in to see the inside of the house for the first time.

Well, taking it all in he noticed a tiny scrap of carpet peeking out of a small door in the ceiling of a workshop at the back of the garage. He got a ladder and climbed up to explore the unseen space. It was dark and musty. Ferrin could see a black metal box sitting there. It was a heavy metal box, the kind used to haul ammunition during World War II. When he opened it up he found old stamps, bond certificates, and other random memorabilia, and a pile of cash which ended up being \$45,000 worth of cash. What made this memorable was that he gave it all back.

He told his family, "You can't make plans for money like this. It just doesn't feel right to do anything but give it back. So, I immediately closed the box, locked it in my truck, and called my wife, 'Honey, you won't believe what I just found.'" His wife Sarah immediately knew the couple had to return the money to its rightful owners. The problem was Arnold Bangerter, the former homeowner, had passed away in November 2010. His youngest son Dennis Bangerter, the executor of Bangerter's estate, had just signed their 1950s red brick home over to the new owners. It took the Ferrins three hours to sort out and count all the cash that was in that box all the while teaching a lesson of honesty to their two young sons who were helping them and who wanted to keep just one of the bundles for themselves and kept trying to slip coins into their pockets.

Josh Ferrin said he told them, "The house needs some work. We could use the \$45,000 for remodeling, but Mr. Bangerter didn't save that money for us. He saved it for his family. I never considered the money mine. You can't allow yourself to think like that."

You know, when I read that article, I thought the real value of that decision was not how it benefited the Bangerter family to get that family heirloom back. The real benefit was to his own family who saw an example in their father of integrity that they would never forget. I don't know if Josh Ferrin is a Christian or not, but he gave a lesson of Godly character.

That's the kind of lessons Paul taught the Thessalonians and that parents need to give their children, consistent acts of purity, faithfulness, integrity that make Godly character visible and believable. Paul reminded these believers that they should live the way they had seen him live. He said in verse 10:

You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.

You know, what impresses me with that is he says, "You are witnesses and so is God." In other words, "There is no discrepancy between what you're seeing and what God is seeing. It is the real deal all the time and in all places. God sees it, and so do you." The consistency that made a powerful impact.

Well, what is it that they saw? He said, "They were witnesses to a holy life," verse 10:

You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy . . . we were among you who believed.

You know, in the New Testament there a number of words translated "holy." This is a very interesting one, rarely used. This one word here means "holiness as it relates to carefully fulfilling our duty to God." There is a responsibility with it. A duty to God by living pure from evil conduct and observant of God's will. It signifies the character of a man who lives in right relation to God and recognizes his duty to live for God.

Men who are like this are self-starters. You don't have to constantly babysit these guys. You don't have to always be watching over their shoulder. You don't have to keep constantly reminding them to read their Bible or pray or go to church or serve or give or do all the things that God calls people to do. You don't have to tell them constantly to love their families and to make the right priorities and have the right time. These guys do this. They understand it's their duty. They are seeking God and a holy life like that on their own. Many times you'll find these guys are outspoken, not loud or obnoxious, but clear and consistent. Everyone knows where they stand with God, and they have a life that backs it up. They're not ashamed to speak up for God and his interests. You'll not find them ashamed in any setting to be able to speak up for God and his interests. They are also uncompromising. When it comes to lowering standards or cutting corners, these guys walk it straight and they stand firm. They openly admit it when they don't.

How do men develop a holiness like this? It comes from a deep desire to be like God and to live a life pleasing to him. Now, we hear about accountability all time. I got accountability partners. I'm accountable to my wife. I got all these accountability things, and that's all good. But the fact of the matter is this: if you do not desire to please God and to live with him a holy life that glorifies him and is right, you'll probably not be truly accountable to all those other people because if you can live a life that lies to God you can lie to anybody. Ultimately, accountability is good, but we gotta be accountable to the one who sees and knows everything. Paul said, "God has seen my testimony and so have you." Wow. This kind of life comes from spending a quality, consistent time with the source of all holiness. That's God himself. It comes from not allowing your mind, your mouth, or your life to be used in unholy ways. It's men who seek God and live for him, and they do it because it's not a burden, it's a joy.

Paul said also they were witnesses to a righteous life.

You are witnesses, and so is God, of how . . . righteous . . . we were among you who believed.

This is not self-righteous or holier than thou, but these are people who are reflecting the righteousness of Christ. In fact, the word "righteous" as we learned on Mother's Day means "in a straight way." It is being morally just. They show their families what a morally just and right life for Jesus actually looks like, so they're honest. Their words match their actions so they are believable. They are morally straight. You're not gonna find these guys looking at pornography or watching questionable shows or perusing the swimsuit magazines or ads in the newspaper. They don't do it, because they understand that those images are offensive to God. They're not

right. They're not meant for their eyes to see those, so they steer away from those because they don't want that stuff in their head. These men realize their weaknesses, and they give the devil no opportunity. They live as Paul did, focused on Christ and his righteousness.

You remember in the book of Philippians, Paul wrote a section in Chapter 3 about his focus that's terribly convicting but very encouraging. Philippians 3 verse 7:

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.<sup>8</sup> What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ<sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

Paul said, "I lived that right life out before you." It's a life you don't easily forget. He also said that they had witnessed a blameless life. Guys, this is really encouraging. You are witnesses and so is God of how blameless we were among you who believed. It's a word that means "free from all valid charge." It does not mean perfect. It does not mean sinless. It doesn't mean being right all the time. It means "genuine, real." So when we sin, when we are wrong, when we are at fault, we own it. We don't lie. We don't make excuses. We don't blame somebody else. We say, "I'm responsible for that. I made that choice. I did that." We confess it. We repent of it so that when any charge is laid against us, our families can see and God can see it's already being dealt with God's way. In many ways, to live a blameless life, Paul was telling them, "You saw me show you how to handle sin and failure in a way that keeps you blameless before God."

You know, I read these kinds of things because I'm a learner, truly, and wasn't taught this stuff when I was younger. When I got married I had to learn this, and these guys became my role models and my examples. When I read stuff like this that's terribly convicting but very encouraging, I find myself asking questions. One of the questions I like to ask is this: What kind of life is my family seeing? What kind of life am I demonstrating before their eyes every day? What do they see me doing?

Guys, our families don't expect us to be perfect. In fact, they know we're not. I have never gotten a Father's Day card that said, "Dad, you are perfect." I've never gotten one of those because I'm not. But they do expect us to be real and genuine. Fathers who lead their families with Godly character will be leading their families to walk with God. Guys, the good part about this is no matter how you think you may have failed in the past; no matter maybe all your kids are grown, you never had a chance to do it, it's never too late to say, "I want to become the man God wants me to be. I want to start doing what God calls me to do." It's never too late for that. In fact if you had a whole life of not doing that and suddenly you change and you say, "You know what? I'm gonna learn it, and I'm gonna be honest about it, and I'm gonna be real, and I'm gonna follow through, and I'm gonna look to God help me with this." The change in your life alone may be enough to rivet your family's attention that something is different in dad. That difference is Jesus.

Not only men of godly character, but fathers are called to lead their families to live a life worthy of God. Verse 11:

For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children,<sup>12</sup> encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

"To live a life worthy."

Many of you know I wasn't raised in a Christian home. I don't know who my biological father is. I've never seen a picture of him. I really don't know very much about him. My stepdad, whom my mom married when I was still little, the only dad I've ever known, was not a Christian. He had faults as all men do, but the thing I remember about him was he was a hard-working man. He took seriously the charge to care for his family. He was also a man of his word, which I respected. Now, my dad was a man of few words, but when he said something you can believe it. He taught us, his three boys, to do the same. That's why when I didn't live worthy of that standard, I felt the shame of it because I knew I wasn't living worthy of what I'd been taught.

Now, I've shared with you many times about my rural New England upbringing. I share it with you today again to help you to understand the context of what I'm about to tell you. Imagine a village life where you're known, even as a little kid, by almost everybody in the village, everybody in town. At seven or eight years old you can leave home for the day in the summer to go play. You're gone all day. You don't come home at lunch. You don't come home in the afternoon. You come home at dinner or at dark and your parents never worry about you because they know that wherever you are somebody knows you. If you're thirsty you can get a drink at their house. If you're hungry, they've probably already fed you. If you're doing anything off-track, they're gonna find out about it because they are gonna call them because everybody knows who you are.

It's in that context that I shared with you before one of the most powerful lessons on living worthy from one of our neighbors named Mr. Miller. Mr. and Mrs. Miller in that village were an older, respected couple and rightly so. They had a big yard. As they got older, they needed help mowing it. To be asked as a 10 or 11-year-old to mow their yard was an honor. They paid me to do it. It took three hours. I got four dollars. Their yard was huge. They asked me to do it. He said, "I'll pay you this much." I told him I would do it on this day every week in the summer. On this day is mowing day, I'll come and do it -- except on mowing day I wanted to play baseball with my friends. If I spent three hours mowing the grass I wouldn't have been able to play baseball, so I decided I was gonna blow off Mr. Miller. I'll do it at another time or whatever, not that big a deal.

I wasn't a Christian at the time so I didn't pray about it, but I remember coming up to the edge of his house. The problem was I had to go by his house to get to the ball field. I remember sitting off to the side of the house on my bike watching his yard making sure I couldn't see him and he couldn't see me. I was gonna zip right past and get to the ball field before he saw me, but it didn't work. He saw me. He whistled and yelled and called me back. I came up to him out of respect. He said, "Where are you going?"

I said, "I'm going to play baseball."

He said, "This is mowing day. You gave me your word. This is our agreement. This is mowing day."

I got off my bike, went in the barn, got the mower out, went out to mow the lawn, but I was not in a good mood. I was mowing doughnuts in his grass and chewing it up and jerking his machine around. I was obviously angry, and I was acting like a jerk. Mr. Miller saw it. He came out. He shut off the mower. They called me Chipper in that village. He said, "Chipper, I'm really disappointed in you. Don't come back until you're ready to do it right. Here's a quarter for your trouble." I couldn't take the quarter, and I couldn't take the look in his eyes. I went down to the ball field, but I didn't feel like playing.

I remember coming back, going up his driveway to his house thinking, What am I gonna say? I just went up to him and told him, "I'm really sorry. Would you give me another chance?"

He said, "There's the mower."

I went back out and, man, you've never seen lines as straight as I mowed for him. Still to this day I can remember how good it felt to know that I was acting worthy of Mr. Miller's trust and worthy of the word I had given him.

Paul said that as a dad I'm supposed to teach my family how to live worthy of God. That word "worthy" means "full of weight, full of worth," a life that's worthy of God.

Do you remember in the book of Ephesians in Chapter 4 Paul uses that same word again? Remember, in Ephesians the first three chapters talk about what a real Christian is. A real Christian is a person who has God living in them. You'd never be fooled by that. A real Christian is a person who has God living in them. The second half of the book, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 tells how a real Christian with God living in them lives, and he starts the application section in Chapter 4 verse 1 with this:

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

It's the same word Paul used with the Thessalonians, to live a life worthy. That phrase literally means "bring up the beam of the scale." It's a literal translation meaning "you profess to have God living in you; therefore, bring your life, your words, your conduct, your behavior into balance with what you profess." That was the image Paul used and the word he used to describe living a worthy life. He said, "That's what I taught the Thessalonians to do, to live a life in balance, worthy of their profession, worthy of God."

How do you do that? How do you lead people to live a life worthy of God? Paul said in verse 11:

For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children,  
<sup>12</sup>encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

Paul said he did it by encouraging them. The word is one that means "to soothe" or "to console" or "to stimulate" by coming alongside and speaking. The focus of encouraging is on words. Fathers are to be like encouraging coaches, not barking out commands, but using encouraging words that help people to see that what they're doing affects God and is worthy of him. You might say to your wife something like, "You know what? You're doing a great job as a wife and a mom. God is really using you in our home." That's the kind of word that would qualify as encouragement. Or to kids, it's not always "Don't" or "No" or "Stop it." There's a need for those words, but we also need to find ways to use words to encourage them to see that what they're doing has worth to God.

So when your kid comes home having been bullied and you feel like going down there and grabbing that fellow eight-year-old and thrashing the tar out of them, instead, you say, "You know what? I'm really sorry for what you had to go through today. God's sorry too. Why don't we get down together and ask him how we're gonna respond to this. Maybe that kid who's picking on you needs to know who He is." Or at times when your kids don't make the grade or they didn't make the team, or they didn't get the part, or they didn't hit the homerun, or whatever it is they think they fell short of – whenever our kids were discouraged with their performance or got a grade that maybe wasn't the best or whatever, I always used to ask them, "Did you do your best today? Did you do your best today?"

If they said, "Yes, dad, I did my best."

I'd say, "You know what? God's pleased with that and so am I because God wants you to give his best and when you do he's pleased whatever the result."

Encouraging words that show that God is worthy. He also said, "We did it by comforting them. "Comforting" is the same root word as "encouraging," but the emphasis is not on words, it's on actions. It's personal involvement. It's being there to give them what they want most: the comfort of your presence. It's a shoulder to lean on. It's a timely hug. It's holding their hand. It's getting down and praying with them. It's holding them when they just need to be held. It's showing appropriate affection and giving yourself so that people can feel the love of God in that. It's the idea behind Comforter.

He said, "I did it by urging them." The word "urging" is another interesting one. It means literally "to testify, to testimony." So your life is a testimony of what living a life worthy of God is like, and it testifies to them which urges them to do the same. It's being a role model they can follow. It's living a life that leaves lasting impressions that are believable and therefore urges others to value the God behind your actions. "If God is worthy to you like that and you treat me like that, then perhaps I need to live worthy of this God as well." That's kind of the idea.

To be sure that in the midst of our many other demands we take the time to be present enough to show our families how to live lives worthy of God, Paul said, "I did this for you." The Thessalonians saw it, and they went on to be a church that was known for their faith, their hope, and their love. Their faithfulness and consistency became known all over the Empire which encouraged and comforted and urged others to live worthy of God as well.

You know, whenever I read stuff like this, I probably feel a lot like the rest you guys - a little bit overwhelmed. I have a tendency to think about where I'm blowing it rather than where I'm doing well, which is where most of us usually in up parking on this. But I'm encouraged to know, and I want you to be encouraged, God is really with you in this because I can tell you, with my background, if God can continue to teach me how some of this is supposed to work he can teach anybody.

In fact, when I got married, one of my biggest concerns was whether or not I could even lead a family, much less the way God wanted it done. Karla had known the Lord since she was five years old raised in a pastor's home, a godly man who lived out what he preached. I know Karla's whole history. I don't know of a single time in her entire life where she ever wavered in her devotion to God. When I met Karla I had only known the Lord two years. She took a huge risk to say "Yes" to me, and I've told her that many times. "You took a huge risk."

When we went for premarital counseling with Pastor Travaille down in San Jose at Karla's home church, he knew her history and he knew a bit of mine and he saw the gap. He asked the question, "How prepared you feel to lead this family?"

I said, "Not very well. I'm a little concerned about it."

I still remember the three things he asked me that have been so helpful to me through the ages for a guy who didn't know what he was doing and needed some encouragement. This is what he asked me. He looked at me and he said, "Larry, do you how to read the Bible?"

I said, "Yeah, I know how to read the Bible."

He said, "Then you make sure it's being read in your home and you and your wife are reading it every day, when kids come along they're reading it every day, and more than that they're seeing you live it out and follow it and obey it so that they can come to trust that this word is truly God's word. Can you do that?"

I said, "Yes, sir, I can do that."

He said, "Then you can lead your family." He said, "Larry, you how to pray?"

"Yeah, I know how to pray."

He said, "Then you make sure it's happening in your home. You take your wife and your future kids some day to the throne of grace. You teach them dependence upon God, and that you are looking to God as the true source, the true provider, the true wisdom. You do that in a way where they see that and come to trust that. Can you do that?"

I said, "Yes, sir, I can do that."

He said, "Then you can lead your family." He didn't know where we were gonna end up, but he said to me, "Do you know how to go to church?"

I said, "Yeah, I know how to go to church."

He said, "Then you make sure you're there every week. You make it's a priority for you and your family. Don't ever make it that they've gotta be pushing you to go. You demonstrate to them the need to be worshiping God, joined together with a church family, growing and serving, giving and praying, and being involved in God's kingdom work in a local church. Can you do that?"

"Yes, sir, I can do that."

He said, "Then you can lead your family." Did you hear what he was saying to me? "Larry, in the end, none of us knows how to do this. So love God and be a man of God and show your family what it looks like because if you'll do that you can fulfill the role God's given you to fulfill. You can lead them to walk with God."

It doesn't guarantee that all of our kids are gonna do it, but it does mean they don't have to grow up without an example what it looks like. Paul said in verse 10:

You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. <sup>11</sup> For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, <sup>12</sup> encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

And what was the result? It made the word of God he preached believable. Verse 13:

<sup>13</sup> And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

Paul wasn't the one in the end who made the difference for the Thessalonians. God was the one who made the difference. He could make a difference because a man like Paul had shown them who God is and what living for him looks like.

Father's Day is a time for me to really assess at every stage of life. My kids are all grown. They have kids of their own. I'm getting a double dose of this come around again with grandchildren to think about what's really important and the example I'm giving to them. You may be just a dad starting out, or you may have your kids fully grown. You may feel like you've done it well, or you failed most of the way. But the fact of the matter is wherever you are it's never too late to begin doing what father's supposed to do to fulfill a role that only he can do.

Ladies, if you're in this alone, your husband's there but he's disengaged or he doesn't know the Lord or you are going it on your own, the job is tougher but I want you to know God is the best father you'll ever have for your kids and everything you do to point them to God, God can use to make a difference in their lives. For those dads who are there right now in the home who still have influence or impact on any kid's lives, I can't think of a better time than Father's Day to say, "Lord, I want to continue on the path and learn more," or "I want to begin," but whatever it is, I want you to use it to do what a father can do, and he will more than you know.

*Thank you, God, for this reminder. I need it. I have a tendency to look back over my life and see all the things I wished I could've done better. I marvel at what you've done at all. I thank you for that advice early on and for people like the apostle Paul who have reinforced that Godly character and living worthy of God never go out of style. It's a role that will never be passed off. It's ours, like a father dealing with his children.*

*Lord, as we close out our service today on this Father's Day, encourage these men. You're using them more than they know. No matter where we may have fallen short, you're ready to meet us there and help us one step at a time to be more the men you want us to be. Thank you, God, that I get to be in a church where I get to do this with guys just like me: no better, no worse, just learning together. May you be pleased as we surrender everything to you for you to do the work that only you can. We'll look back on this as a Father's Day that was one of the best. Whether we're alone or with our families today, God, if you have your way with us and we with you, this will be one of the best and we thank you for it. In Jesus' name, Amen.*