

## **A Father's Advice** **1 king 2:1-4**

### **Happy Father's Day**

There is a popular quote for Mother's Day. "God cannot be everywhere therefore he made mothers." I bet you have heard this quote. There is Father's Day version of this as well. It says, "God couldn't be everywhere, so He invented Dads to handle leaky pipes and weird noises at night." (Dan Taylor) Happy Father's Day! Thanks to all fathers who not only handle broken pipes but also love their children and do their best to protect their family. Keely Chace says, "A dad has arms to lift high, a heart to love, shoulders to support, a smile to reassure, a hand of blessing to send you out into the world, a warm embrace to welcome you back home." If you are a man, I hope you have been a great father to you children, grand-children and those who don't have a good father-figure in their lives.

As you know, my father passed away in 2009. He passed away fifteen-year ago, but I still feel his influence on my life. My father was a faithful pastor who loved his people and the church, and of course, he dearly loved his family. My father was not a typical Korean father of his time. Most fathers of his generation, were typically clumsy in expressing their love to their children. However, he wanted to express his love to my brother and me so our greeting was a hug. Whenever I left or came back home, he gave me a hug. I don't know why, but as I get older, I miss his warm hugs. Through his presence and absence, my father has shaped who I am now and I am so grateful for him.

Of course, my father didn't become a good father on his own. After his passing, I found a letter that my father had written to my grandfather during a continuing education program. My grandfather passed away long before I was born so I never met him. In that letter, my father wrote about how he was and how our family was doing. He introduced my mother, brother and me to my grandfather. Of course, he didn't forget bragging about my brother and me for becoming pastors. While reading it, I could feel how my father dearly loved and missed his father and how my grandfather greatly influenced my father in many ways. Although I never met him, I feel blessed to have him as my grandfather and of course, my father as my father!

### **Be Father to Fatherless Generation**

But I am also aware that not all people are blessed with wonderful fathers. Some people struggle with abusive fathers. Some have been ignored and alienated from their fathers. Many people don't have a father-figure in their lives at all, so some people call the current generation a 'fatherless generation.' It means that many people are disconnected from the positive influence of the previous generations. But no one can grow alone and find a right direction in life without learning wisdom from previous generations. An African proverb says, "A youth can walk faster but the elder knows the road." A father or father figure is a person who can share their life-wisdom with the younger generation and help them to grow and live as responsible adults in their own lives and community.

King David is a good example. "When David's time to die approached, he called his son Solomon, saying, "I'm about to go the way of all the earth, but you—be strong; show what you're made of! Do what God tells you. Walk in the paths he shows you: Follow the life-map absolutely, keep an eye out for the signposts, his course for life set out in the revelation to Moses; then you'll get on well in whatever you do and wherever you go. Then God will confirm what he

promised me when he said, ‘If your sons watch their step, staying true to me heart and soul, you’ll always have a successor on Israel’s throne.’(1-4 MSG)

He didn’t tell him how to build a strong army or effectively govern the nation. From his lifelong experience, David knew a right way of life. “Do what God tells you. Walk in the paths he shows you.” He shared his wisdom with Solomon, telling him to listen to and obey God. David shared the most important life lesson with his son. What life lessons have you shared with your children and grandchildren? Are there any words similar to David’s in your will? What wisdom do you want to share with your decedents when you end your journey in this world? Be a loving and godly father who can show the right direction of life rooted in faith. Tell your children about God and show them who God really is.

A little girl asked her Daddy, “How big is God.” Now how would you answer that one? Her question is not unlike asking how big the universe is or why is the sky blue. It’s a hard question for dad. But he wisely answered. “Just a little bigger than you need him to be” and he gently hugged her in his arms. In that way, the father helped his daughter to feel God who is a little bigger than she needs Him to be and a little closer than she assumed. Instead of forcing your children to believe, share the God you know and God’s love you have experienced. Show them and help them to experience the love of God through your words and actions. In fact, this is the way God loves us. Because God loves us, God gives us freedom to make our own choices, and allows us to fill up the pages of our lives. God invites us and guide us to walk on a right path, a way of life and love but God does not force us. As heavenly father, God walks one step behind us, ready to help us when we call him.

### **A loving Father guides and walks behind his children.**

A few years ago, I happened to go on my vacation to a campground where Carl Bishop Sr.’s family used to go for their summer vacations. I showed him pictures from my camping trip and Carl Sr. shared his memories of the campground. The campground is on Lona Lake and his children, including Carl Jr. liked to swim in the lake. I have heard that Carl Bishop Jr. was a good swimmer and he wanted to know how far he could swim so he decided to swim across the lake. Lona Lake is a big lake. I paddled about 20 minutes to cross it. Young Carl Jr. wanted to swim across it. Of course, it sounds dangerous. Right? But Carl Bishop Sr. said, “O.K. but just in case of emergency, I will get a boat and follow you.” Carl Jr. didn’t feel that was necessary but Carl Sr. followed him. After a couple of times, Carl jr. set a time record and challenged other kids to beat his time. None of the kids were able to beat his record until Ann, a neighbor girl, finally beat his record. Carl Sr. was about to pull the boat out of water when Carl Jr said, “Dad, get in the boat!” and the competition went on. As I listened to Carl Sr.’s story, I could glimpse how God’s love works for us. Like a loving father, God doesn’t force us to follow his way but allows us to be who we are and enjoy our time in this world. Of course, there are dangers, so God guides us to a right way but still allows us to venture even into some dangerous terrain. God doesn’t leave us alone but walks one step behind us, waiting for us and being ready to help us whenever necessary. One of the best pieces of advice we can share with people is that our heavenly Father is there for us.

### **Be a Father to other people who don’t have a good father figure**

I know that many of our church members are grandparents or great-grandparents. You have finished your job of raising your children. However, you can still be a father to someone who doesn’t have a good father figure in their lives. Some say, “Father is like a huge Tree under

whose shade we grow.” “A father is someone you look up to no matter how tall you grow.” You can be a tree for someone by being a shelter for their souls and wise guide for their lives. Age doesn’t matter for this work. During my father’s funeral, I heard many church members saying that my father was like a father to them. I didn’t know that I shared my father with so many other people until that moment. No blood lineage is necessary to be like a tree for someone. All that matters is your kindness and love toward them. You can be a precious gift to this fatherless generation and share life-changing advice with them. “Do what God tells you. Walk in the paths he shows you.” Amen.