

HOW FATHERS CAN SAVE A NATION

Dads, don't let anyone fool you. You are among the most important people on earth. Since the early 60s, different groups, including our own government, have tried to tell us that fathers are not important. We went a generation trying to discredit fathers, but now their absence could be measured. In almost every area of life, children are worse off when there is no father in the house. Children without fathers are more prone to have health problems, social and emotional development problems, and are more likely to get into trouble and go to jail.

But a godly father is a powerful influence on his family. Consider the results of this study.

1. If both your parents worshiped with you regularly while you were growing up, there's an 80 percent likelihood that you'll worship God regularly as an adult.
2. If only your mother worshiped regularly with you, there's only a 30 percent probability that you'll worship regularly as an adult.
3. If only your father worshiped regularly with you, the likelihood that you'll worship regularly as an adult increases to 70 percent! (www.bible.org)

Fathers have an enormous impact on their children's faith and values.

The Bible places a tremendous responsibility on the shoulders of fathers. In Deuteronomy, it is the father's responsibility to teach the faith to their children. I think that it is fair to say if there is moral breakdown in a society, fathers had something to do with it.

When you read the book of Amos, you have to be frightened because it describes a time in the lives of God's people when they have gone so far from God that God has no choice but to punish them. And that means that fathers failed to be godly fathers. Perhaps we can listen to the prophet and learn something. Maybe we can escape the same kind of judgment.

God had chosen Israel to be his people and made a covenant with them. The basis of the covenant was the Law summed up in the Ten Commandments. "I will be your God and you will be my people and you will live holy lives." You will live holy lives before me by keeping my commandments.

Israel was to be a family under the headship of God as father. Yet, Israel childishly rebelled against God over and over again. They rebelled against God's rule and the relationship cannot work if God's people reject God's law. They become like the lost world, acting and living as if God was not their creator and Lord.

The prophet brought God's judgment to them. "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth. Therefore I will punish you for your iniquities." Why? Do two men walk together unless they have made an agreement?" We cannot walk with God without an agreement. Two men do not meet to travel together to a particular destination without agreeing to do so. In a similar manner, we do not walk with God without an agreement. Israel's agreement was the covenant. Our agreement is the new covenant written in the blood of Christ. Our covenant was made at the foot of the cross.

Today we have the new covenant in which God's family is called the Church. He calls us out of our darkness and sin and we become a part of his family. The rules of that covenant are basically the same as the Ten Commandments except that now they are supposed to be written on our hearts. Our new birth in Christ changes our nature and our nature should be to keep the law of God.

But the old nature still hangs around and makes a claim on each of us. And sometimes our old nature rules over us instead of Christ. We know better and yet we follow our sin nature instead of being new men in Christ. When that happens we need to hear the Lion of Judah roar and take heed.

God asks a series of questions.

Amos 3:4-6 4 Does a lion roar in the forest when he has no prey? Does a young lion growl from his den unless he has captured something?

5 Does a bird fall into a trap on the ground when there is no bait in it? Does a trap spring up from the earth when it captures nothing at all?

6 If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people tremble? If a calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it?

When the lion roars, the animal kingdom knows that the lion is about to strike or has already killed his prey. The trumpet sounds and the people fear because it is a warning that calamity is about to strike, the foreign army is about to attack.

In other words, when words of warning are spoken, do we not heed God's word? When the land bulges under the weight of our sin and when the tragic results of our wayward lives becomes known, should we not read the signs and heed the warnings? God will not long tolerate his people when they stray and rebel and they continually sin against him.

But what would happen if Christian fathers decided that no matter what, they will serve God and be Godly fathers, friends, churchmen and citizens? The billionaires fund the wars and the politicians wield power, but they cannot change the world. But ordinary men living

godly lives are the ones who will influence history.

I have always been for the little guy, the underdog because, most of the time I have been the underdog. You can guess why. I was always short, I did not come from wealth or power. I am as ordinary as they come. To this day I pick the underdog in a game or a race and root for them. I know that you think that ordinary fathers cannot change the world. But I am telling you that whatever moral state we find ourselves in, it is because of fathers. We are the influencers of the future and the guide to the present. We set the pace and style of what is acceptable and what is not. And if we live godly lives, we change our world.

In order for men to be the kind of fathers who can save a nation, we have to give up our selfish desires and put God first. I know what selfish desire is. I want my way and want what I want when I want it. But when God works in us, we become servants. We love our wives as Christ loved the church. We guide our children but not by cruelty or provoking them to anger. We love our neighbors with a godly love. And most all, when we put away our selfishness, we provide an example to our children and to our world.

What would we look like if we lived that kind of life? What would we do, how would we behave? Try this out: Exodus 20:3-17

- 1 You shall have no other gods before Me.
- 2 You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God,
- 3 You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.
- 4 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- 5 Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.
- 6 You shall not murder.
- 7 You shall not commit adultery.
- 8 You shall not steal.
- 9 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- 10 You shall not covet,

Study these and see how they apply to every aspect of our lives. You will find that they apply to almost everything that you do. The Ten Commandments become the guide for godly fathers. You no longer have to ask, how do I live? These reflect what God desires from us all. Live them and I promise that you will be a good neighbor, a good father and husband, and you will save a nation.