TOPIC: THE FAMILY SHEPHERD

Godly husbands and fathers need to fulfill the roles of loving leader, provider, protector, teacher, mentor and intercessor for their families.

KEY POINTS

The 23rd Psalm is the most famous and most often quoted psalm in the Bible. It speaks of the Lord's care for His people and continues to be a great source of comfort to all believers. David has provided us a great lead-in to the topic of this lesson—the place of husbands and fathers as shepherds of their families.

In his desire to build and establish a new family, a man enters into a very private, mysterious quest for a life-long marriage relationship with a woman. This quest is filled with danger…intrigue…and cloak-and-dagger secrecy that is totally outside the realm of human reasoning!

As a wise man said:

> There are three things which are too wonderful for me, Four which I do not understand: 19The way of an eagle in the sky, The way of a serpent on a rock, The way of a ship in the middle of the sea, And the way of a man with a maid (Proverbs 30:18-19 NASB).

Once the marriage has taken place, let us see how men need to live as husbands and fathers:

- Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun (Ecclesiastes 9:9 NASB);
- "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her…. Each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself" (See Ephesians 5:25,28-31,33a NASB);
- "Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them" (Colossians 3:19 NASB);
- "…You husbands must give honor to your wives…. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered" (1 Peter 3:7 NLT);
- "An elder must live a blameless life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who don't have a reputation for being wild or rebellious…" (See Titus 1:5-9 NLT);
- "…Teach the older men to exercise self-control, to be worthy of respect, and to live wisely. They must have sound faith and be filled with love and patience" (Titus 2:1-2 NLT).

If God blesses us with children, our privilege and responsibility as fathers is again demonstrated in, and regulated by, the Word of God.

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, the first words of the prayer were "Our Father".

God describes Himself as our Father and demonstrates His love for us by giving us full and complete access to Himself, promising never to leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

In Psalm 23, He further describes Himself as our Shepherd who leads, feeds, guides, disciplines and comforts us, along with providing for our future.

What an example for us to follow as earthly fathers! Hence the title for today: "The Family Shepherd".

KEY SCRIPTURE

Psalm 23

- It is hard to overstate the importance of our role as "father" in the lives of our children.
- Whether we know it or not, believe it or not, or act upon it, we are actually molding the lives of our children in profound ways. The things we teach them stick with them and our example forms the basis of their living. Therefore, our children need us to be true fathers, present and active in their lives!
- **Wherever you are, be present!**
- A father is a teacher, a provider and very importantly—an intercessor for his children (see Deuteronomy 6:5-7). A wonderful example of how fathers should conduct themselves in these roles can be found in Job 1:1-2, 4-5.
- In addition to the apostle Paul, who adds his own words of instruction (see 1 Timothy 2:8, 5:8), there is also a word from the writer to the Hebrews (see 13:5-6).
- Every husband and father has the God-given responsibility to fulfill these roles he has chosen in the fear of God.
- There is an old phrase that states 'Rome wasn't built in a day', and neither will your relationship with your family be built instantaneously. But you have to start somewhere. Any start (or continuation) of relationship-building with your wife and/or children is commendable.
- Trust God for His help and guidance; also understand that our families will gladly "cut us some slack" if they see we are really trying.
- May God help us as men to become models of Christ in our homes!

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. In your own words, what is the role of a husband/father inside and outside of the home? Support your viewpoint with scriptures.
2. From your own experience or from observing the experiences of others, what are some of the positive examples that a father can display to a child or a husband can display towards his wife? Conversely, what would you deem as bad examples and why would you deem them as such?
3. Do you try to model some of the positive examples you observed from a father/father figure? Are there any negative examples that you try to avoid? If so, share one example with the group.
4. Take a moment to pray for the fathers and husbands in the group—and for those who desire to be so in the future—that each will fulfill their roles as shepherds for their families.

Prayer Time

God, help men to be models of Christ in their homes. May others encourage husbands and fathers to take their place as shepherds of their families.

L.G. ice-Breaker: What is one of the embarrassing things you recall your father/father figure doing in the past?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, JUNE 18, 2017

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

(Reminds me/Confirms) (New idea) (Think about)

⊗ (Do this) (Speaks to my heart) (Must share)

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PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

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