Father's Day

Ephesians 6: 1 – 4

The last couple times Pastor Ralph brought the message, he spoke of the influence of Godly Moms and Grandmas and then about raising Godly children.

Today we celebrate fathers, I believe we should celebrate not only the men who have had children of their own, but also the men who gave of themselves, their hearts, their minds, their skills, their wisdom, and their faith in the one true God, Creator and Sustainer of the Universe to those young people who God placed in their path.

Our Scripture passage today is from

Ephesians 6: 1 – 4

*1 Children obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do.*

*2 “Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise:*

*3 If you honor your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.”*

*4 Fathers do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.*

Give each father a bag with 6 items in it.(See items below)

OK, Dads, now you can open the bag. Each item in your bag represents a part of the truth that I have read to you from this portion of Ephesians.

**I. SALTED PEANUTS**

Remember when your children were born? They were so small. They were small and salty… Just like the peanuts in the bag. They were “as small as a PEANUT.”

They cried a lot of SALTY tears and because of the love that you felt for them, you shed salty tears with them. You took responsibility, you and your wife brought them into the world.

You spent time holding and comforting and feeding and playing with them. Are you spending enough quality time with them now that they are older?

If you do not spend enough time with your children, or grandchildren you may end up crying salty tears because your lack of contact and interest pushed them to find fulfillment in worldly stuff.

We could also talk about being the “salt of the earth” in the world and in the home… Matthew 5: 13 *“You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless."*

If a seasoning has no flavor, it has no value. If Christians make no effort to affect the world around them, they are of little value to God. If we are too much like the world, we are worthless.

Christians should not blend in with everyone else. Instead, we should affect others positively, just as seasoning brings out the best flavor in food.

**II. SNICKERS CANDY BAR**

Children need discipline. But at times they may SNICKER behind your back when they do not get their own way. Or roll their eyes right in front of you.

Dads need to take godly leadership.(“In the Lord.” (v.1)) Do you take time every day to read the Bible, to pray for your children and your wife? Do your children see you doing your absolute best to treat them fairly and kindly?

They also need plenty of fun. They need “SNICKERS” or laughs. “All work and no play make Jack and Jill dull children.” Plan fun things. Teach them to give and to be thankful for what they have.

*Proverbs 23: 24 The father of godly children has cause for joy. What a pleasure to have children who are wise.*

Are your homes filled with laughter or with angry yelling?

Paul writes in verses 1 - 3*: “1 Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. 2 “Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise: 3 If you honor your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth."*

Note in verse two that this is not an option for children, but a “commandment” from God. The result of obedience and honor is ENJOYING a long life.

**III. CRACKERS**

Simple comfort food. Kids need the basics. Food, protection, security, love, spiritual/Biblical guidance, worship experiences such as family prayers, church services, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Christian summer camps, Christian retreat times, Christian music, Christian adult friends, and Christian peers.

They need consistent Christlike examples: Not “Do as I say, not as I do.” Fathers who model honesty, love, loyalty, faithfulness…

Fathers who are consistent, fair, alert to the dangers that lurk in the paths of their children. I am sure most of you remember the TV ad "It's 10 PM Do you know where your children are"? Do you know their friends? Children need guidelines, they need limits. True love sets basic limits.

**IV. BEEF JERKEY**

At times, your children will test you. They may think you are a JERK. They start young, incredibly young.

At times they will rebel. But be consistent. As Paul wrote in Hebrews 12:5 – 11

*5 And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as His children? He said, “ My child, do not make light of the LORD’s discipline, and don’t give up when He corrects you.*

*6 For the LORD disciplines those He loves, and He punishes each one He accepts as His child.”*

*7 As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as His own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? 8 If God does not discipline you as He does all of His children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really His children at all.*

*9 Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn’t we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever? 10 For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God’s discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in His holiness.*

*11 No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening it is painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.”*

Do not run out of patience… Be sensitive… Each child is different… Ephesians 6: 4 states; "*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord."*

**V. CRACKER JACK**

Merriam-Webster defines "crackerjack" as outstanding, or excellent person or thing. It is a combination word from crack, as in crack shot, an adjective meaning "expert" or "superior" that dates from the 18th century and Jack has been used for "man" since the mid-1500s, as in "jack-of-all-trades." The snack Cracker Jack name was registered in 1896.

You can become a “CRACKER JACK” of a Father. Study, read, use common sense. Pray a lot for and with your wife and your children. Pray for yourself. As you, “*bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord*.” Just as, through study, experience, and teaching you can become a “CRACKER JACK” Bible student and teacher.

Learn to say, “I love you” to your wife and your children.

Learn to say, “I’m sorry.”

Learn to hug, to kiss, to touch your wife and children. Everyone needs to be loved. If children do not find love at home, they will look for it in the wrong places. Do unto your children what you would like done…

**VI. FRUIT ROLL UPS**

God expects us to bear fruit as Jesus said in John 15: 8 – 12 *8 "When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.*

*9 “I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love.*

*10 When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in His love.*

*11 I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!*

*12 This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you."*

In Galatians 6: 7 – 10 Paul writes *7 "Don’t be misled you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant.*

*8 Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.*

*9 So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.*

*10 Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone especially to those in the family of faith."*

You serve in partnership as co-workers with God in His mission in the world. An important part of that mission is your own family.

CONCLUSION.

All the items that you have are in the bag. Proverbs 16:11 instructs: *Honest scales and balances belong to the LORD; all the weights in the bag are of His making.*

Do an honest job of raising your children. Do not cheat them by taking shortcuts or by succumbing to

worldly means. Do not short-weight your kids.

One day Fathers will be called upon by God to give an account of how they filled their task. Just as Joseph substituted for God as the earthly Father for Jesus, all fathers need to image, model, and as we are learning in our study of Genesis, be the example of God with their children.

Ephesians 6: 3 reminds us that if you honor your father and mother, *“things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.”* (For us as believers, eternal life!)

Have you ever heard this expression, “It’s in the bag?” A father is confidently working on a business deal and you ask him, “How is the deal going?” He replies, “It’s in the bag.”

Godly parenting is the greatest business in the world. As you eat, or maybe share, the items in your bag with your family, let the stuff in your bag remind you of God's Word, what you heard today, the tools you can use to give your children an excellent chance to make Heaven. The tools are in your bag and the bag is in your hands.

What will you do with what is in your bag?

What will you do with the children under your care?

Let's pray

As you go from here, remember this:

God’s love is from everlasting to everlasting,

from generation to generation.

Just as a father has compassion on his children

So, God has compassion on those fear Him,

who listen to His voice, and who do His will.

Go out in the knowledge that the everlasting love of God goes with you.

Amen.