

Life Group Notes 6/18/2023  
Pastor Mark Warren Father's Day

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[If you have observations or questions feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at [tbeachhead@comcast.net](mailto:tbeachhead@comcast.net).-Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to facilitate discussion and to discern the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

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Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions Pastor Mark has raised this week, 6/18. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** Do not be daunted by the number of pages. As an editorial decision, I include each of the passages mentioned in full to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes, rather than having you, the reader, look up each reference. If your Bible is open beside you, you can transfer and annotate from these pages with ease. This week has several footnotes on people and principles in the history of the church. Footnotes are not meant to distract, but enhance the reading, and to help find answers to questions that arise. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On messages on fathers when you're the child.](#)
2. [On messages on fathers when you're the single mom.](#)
3. [On Billy Graham and the broken home.](#)

\*\*\*Almost **New**: At the very end, I've included passages that were mentioned for SOAP journaling and further study during the week. \*\*\*

Mark opens discussing "Superhero Fathers," saying, "Fathers are truly the most powerful force in families and societies, and we cannot diminish the impact that fathers have."

1. What does he mean?
2. What is the fruit when fathers are good fathers?
3. What is the fruit when fathers fail? Is there a cause for failure?

He continues, "It is both the spiritual and the physical that matters. We know what the Father has done, and we are to imitate that in the physical to our own children, biological or spiritual." He says, "Society wants to minimize fatherhood with programs like *The Simpsons* where the fathers are buffoons."

1. What are the results?

2. How difficult is it to honor a father who has dishonored himself and the family?
3. How could Father's day become a day for prayer, healing, repentance and reconciliation?

Mark read off statistics of fatherless homes. He says the homes are:

- Five times more likely to live in poverty.
  - Nine times more likely to drop out of school.
  - Twenty times more likely to go to prison.
  - Higher risk of drug and alcohol abuse.
  - Increased risk of aggressive behavior.
  - Greater chance of runaways.
  - Greater risk of suicide.
4. Have you noticed that this is true?
  5. Do you have a testimony? Prayers to share?
  6. Do you have any encouraging Bible verses?

**Look up Psalm 68:4-6** <sup>4</sup>Sing to God! Sing praises to His name. Exalt Him who rides on the clouds—His name is the LORD—and rejoice before Him. <sup>5</sup>[A father of the fatherless, and a defender of the widows, is God in His holy habitation.](#) <sup>6</sup>God settles the lonely in families; He leads the prisoners out to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a sun-scorched land. **Do you have a testimony where you have seen God step in?**

**Look up Exodus 22:22-24** <sup>22</sup>You must not mistreat any widow or orphan. <sup>23</sup>[If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to Me in distress, I will surely hear their cry.](#) <sup>24</sup>My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword; then your wives will become widows and your children will be fatherless. **How serious is God in His love for the widow and the fatherless? Did you ever notice this? Does God keep His promises?**

**Look up James 1:26-27:** <sup>26</sup>If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not bridle his tongue, he deceives his heart and his religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup>[Pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.](#) **Put this in your own words. What is our responsibility?**

Pastor Mark read "a worthy tale to tell" about a man named Samuel, with all the sound effects. **Can you repeat it? What was the legacy of the father's love on the community? On his own children?** Mark said, "Fathers, this is your story." **How?** He said, "If you're still breathing, it's not too late." **What impact does a truly changed life have on those whom that life touches?**

1. How does a father model a life in Christ?
2. Who's watching?
3. Mark says, "Your life becomes a mirror of what the children become, good or bad." How sobering is this?
4. How does knowing this help us stay awake and alert?

**Look up Ephesians 6:** <sup>1</sup>Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup>"Honor your father and mother" (which is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup>"that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life on the earth." <sup>4</sup>Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath; instead, bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

1. How do these verses apply both ways, to fathers and their children?
2. How is the reward reciprocal?
3. If the father is careful not to provoke the children, what do the children learn from his example?
4. Careful here: Why do you think this verse is addressed to fathers and not mothers?
5. Mark says, "Discipline is good. You're disciplining the children. Disciple them but remember you're modeling the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Explain.

Mark points us to Psalm 103: **12**As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. **13**[As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.](#) **14**For He knows our frame; He is mindful that we are dust.

1. Explain why the idea in verse 12 comes before the idea in verse 13.
2. When you know to what degree you are forgiven, how much easier is it to share that compassion with your children?
3. Are you mindful of your children's frame? Why is the macho man model sometimes inappropriate in child-rearing?
4. Pastor Mark points out that the father provides emotional security and encouragement for the children. How does that work?
5. How does this explain the statistics Mark shared in the fatherless home?

Mark says, Fathers are the building block. **Look up Proverbs 22:6**. **6**[Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.](#)

1. What is the command?
2. How do you do that? What is the father's responsibility in this?
3. How is "training" like "modeling"?
4. What is the reward and the promise?
5. Has a child ever departed from the training? If that ever happens, what part of the promise should guide our prayers?
6. How does this simple act of intentional training speak of, and bear promise for future generations?

**Review Romans 2:** **3**Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? **4**Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? **5**But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

1. Explain how God is very good at role modeling.
2. Compare the model of fatherhood you've shown to the only real Pattern Paul points out here.
3. What happens when we do not do to our children as God has done for us?
4. Is there any room at all for hypocrisy in child rearing? If we're hypocrites in disciplining our children, what hope can we have that they will not be like us?
5. Were you brought closer to God by someone nagging you? Do you have a testimony?
6. Relate how God's kindness brought you to repentance?

**Review Romans 5:** <sup>6</sup>For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— <sup>8</sup>but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1. Why is this important when we consider how to model Christ for our children?
2. How important is humility in expressing love? When God laid down His life for us while we were sinners, what exactly did He foresee?
3. How important is it to foresee a hope and a future for our children? (**Look up Jeremiah 29:10-12** <sup>10</sup>For this is what the LORD says: “When Babylon’s seventy years are complete, I will attend to you and confirm My promise to restore you to this place. <sup>11</sup>For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup>Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. **Explain how God’s severe act of discipline was done apart from anger and with an eye to the outcome, and the children’s future and their hope?**)
4. How do we make our children participants in their own redemption?
5. What practical steps have you taken to bring the best out of your children?

**Look up Hebrews 12:3-11** <sup>3</sup>Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. <sup>4</sup>In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. <sup>5</sup>And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

<sup>6</sup>For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

<sup>7</sup>It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup>If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. <sup>9</sup>Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? <sup>10</sup>For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. <sup>11</sup>For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

1. How was Jesus disciplined? What was the source of the discipline?
2. Hebrews 5:8 says, “Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things He suffered...” Explain? What did Jesus suffer?
3. When something goes wrong, what is the first thing you do? Do you look first to blame, to learn or to solve and strengthen? Explain.
4. How does respecting our father when he disciplines us help us?
5. Does rebellion ever teach? Why not?
6. Have you ever been left without discipline? Have you strayed and not got caught?
7. What was the result? Is life the best teacher? Could a wise father do a better job?

Pastor Mark cautioned us about the attitude that rejoices when the children are put on the bus and sent off to school. He asks, “Who does the teaching in that house?”

1. Are our children safe being taught in today's schools?
2. What are the dangers? How real are those dangers? Do you have a testimony?
3. What steps can we take, as a community, to protect our children?
4. At what point do you withdraw your own children from a school? What have you thought about this?
5. Are you present in your children's education? Are you engaged? What is the difference between being present and being engaged?

Pastor Mark also raised important questions about your home life:

1. Are your children able to express their ideas openly? Are you able to listen? What difficulties does today's culture create in our communication with our kids? To whom do your children listen and whom do they respect more? With whom are they most open to express themselves honestly?
2. Is the show you're watching more important? Or are you more attentive to your children?
3. What role does entertainment play in your day? What entertainment is most and best shared in your family, from which the most fun and satisfaction is derived?
4. Do your sons and daughters know you are there for them and that you will lay down your life for them?
5. What difficulties do these questions present?
6. What difficulties do the ages of your children present?
7. What difficulties does the number offspring add to the challenge?
8. Have the schools and today's culture taught your kids morality? What influence have they had in guiding your children's perspectives?
9. If you're a father, how did you score on Psalm 23, when Pastor read it as "My dad is my superhero?"
10. Richie asked, "Who wants to help their dad be a better dad?" How does that work?

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***The Follow-up Application***

1. Spend time with your heavenly Father. Deliberately take a moment this week to think about the scriptures below in the S.O.A.P study.
2. Intentionally pray for and pray with your children.
3. Write down what you learned this week. If you have children, write down an inventory of each one's needs.
4. Pray for those needs, and let God bring healing to any past hurts.
5. Note this week all the changes and growth you see.

***Take the time to pray.***

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**Scribes Notes:**

- 1. On messages about fathers, when you're a child**—God is interested in preparing you and training you to be the best at what you do, and to discern good and evil. A message like this is part of the training.
- 2. On messages about fathers when you're the single mom**—There are all kinds of reasons in our history, where our own life situations are not optimal, and we still find ourselves responsible for the lives of our children. A message like this one might not address your situation directly. If Jesus learned obedience from the things He suffered, what can you draw from yours? A message on good behavior directs our attention away from the turmoil and strife that satan has clearly sewn in our own lives and turns it to the hope and the promise that in all this, God causes it to work not only for our good, but for the good of our own offspring. God's promise is sure, and His heart is for the widow and the abandoned mother and children. That much is clear. We learn to keep our eyes on the joy that is set before us, as Jesus did, and draw strength to endure.
- 3. On Billy Graham and the broken home**—Billy Graham made a comment once when he was asked how to build back a broken home with single moms and dads that I've never forgotten. He said, "You can't unscramble eggs...But you can make a decent omelet."

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**For further study:**

Take a moment each day this week to apply the SOAP (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Jeremiah 29:11-12

Tuesday: Hebrews 12: 5-7

Wednesday: Hebrews 5: 8 and 12:2

Thursday: Romans 2: 3-5

Friday: Romans 5: 6-8

Saturday: James 1: 26-27