

The Father as King



Fatherhood (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again. This week I'm sharing on the theme of "Fatherhood," the way in which a man can most fully express the divine likeness in which he was originally created.

I've been pointing out that every father has three main ministries in his home: priest, prophet, and king. Today I'm going to speak on the third of these ministries, the ministry of king.

The function of a king, of course, is to rule or to govern. In modern American years the word "king" is not always too acceptable although it's a word that's used throughout the Bible. But if you don't like the word "king," let's substitute the word "governor." At least the function of the father is to rule or to govern his household on behalf of God. If we turn to the writings of Paul in 1 Timothy 3, he discusses the qualifications for a man who wants to hold the position of an elder or an overseer or a bishop. There different words are used, but the point is it's the man who is to lead or to govern God's people. And not the least important, in fact perhaps the most important of all the qualifications, is the condition of that man's home. How does that man function in his home? This is what Paul says in 1 Timothy 3:4B5:

> "He must have proper authority in his own household, and be able to control and command the respect of his children." (For if a man cannot rule in his own house how can he look after the Church of God?) (JBP)

So you see that a man is expected to rule in his own house. He's expected to exercise authority to have his children respectful, obedient and under his control. If the man can't achieve that at home, Paul indicates, he has no hope of succeeding as a ruler or a governor or a leader in God's church.

The word that is used there for "to rule" literally in Greek means "to stand out in front" or "to stand at the head of." It contains various related ideas. I'd like to give you a few ways you could understand it. To rule, to lead, to stand at the head, to protect, to control. Essentially, it means that the father is the head of his home, that he's out in front, that he sets an example, that he stands between his family and all the dangers and pressures of life. It means really that he is a

man. He's got what it takes. He's got what modern speech calls "guts." It takes "guts" to be a man and to be a father.

Paul then goes on to say successful leadership at home is essential for leadership in the church. There's a strong reason for this. The home is really the church in miniature or in microcosm or in embryo. In the church there are three main elements: the pastor (the shepherd), the deacon (or the helper), and the congregation (or the flock). Those correspond to the three main elements in the home. In the home the father has the responsibilities of pastor or shepherd. The wife, according to Scripture, is the helper, created to help her husband—the helper or the deacon. The children are the congregation or the flock, so that God has built into the family all the basics that make up a proper New Testament church. And God says, in effect, to the father of the family, "You make it succeed in your little church, the one I've committed to you, in your own home, and then you qualify for promotion in the church of God. Let me say this also as a matter of observation and experience, you can get built up a large congregation of people who attend the church, but in the last resort, a congregation is no stronger than the families that make it up. If the families are not in order, the church cannot be in order.

As a picture of a father who accepted and fulfilled his responsibility to rule or to govern or to be king of his home, I want to turn now to Abraham. There's a very significant passage in Genesis 18 where the Lord is speaking about Abraham and amongst other things He reveals why He chose Abraham to be the head of the new nation that was ultimately to bring redemption to all humanity.

I don't know whether you have ever wondered why did God choose Abraham. He was looking for a man. Doubtless there were hundreds of thousands of men, contemporaries of Abraham, all over the earth's surface. Out of all those hundreds of thousands God chose one man. Is it an unrevealed mystery why God chose Abraham? No, it's not, because God Himself tells us just why He chose that one man, Abraham, to be the head of this new race on which the salvation of all other races was going to depend. I'm going to read here in Genesis 18:17B19:

> "And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (KJV)

Let me point out certain very important facts about those verses. First of all, let's look at the meaning of Abraham's name. Originally his name was Abram, which means "exalted father." Then, when God made His covenant, blessed him, promised him a great number descendants, God changed his name to Abraham, which means "father of a multitude." But you'll see that in both forms the first fact about his name is that he's a father. That's tremendously significant. God chose Abraham as a father.

The second fact is that fatherhood, when its duties are carried out, builds a mighty nation. God said of Abraham, "he shall surely become a great and mighty nation." Why? Because he could be relied upon to fulfill his obligations as a father.

Thirdly, why did God choose Abraham? He states it Himself. He says, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." What did God see in Abraham that made Him choose him? He saw that he would command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord. He could rely on Abraham to fulfill his duties as a governor in his family.

I want to just point out that word "command." It's a strong word. It's almost a military word. There may be some mothers or wives listening that would say, "Well, are you speaking about being a dictator?" No, but I'm speaking about a man who is a man. A man who knows his position and responsibility. There are some situations in which a man under God is responsible to command his household. He's responsible to say, "In order to please God and have His blessing, this is the way we're going to do it in our home. We're not going to do this, but we are going to do that." A father has a right to determine some of the basic rules of the household: what time they'll eat together, the time that younger children must be in, the kind of entertainments that are permitted, the amount of time that they spend in front of television and the kind of program that they watch. A father has not merely the privilege, he has the duty of commanding his family in these respects, and God said, "I'll bring upon Abraham that which I've promised, because I can trust him to do that for Me."

Then the fourth fact that I want to point out in that context is that Abraham, all through the rest of the Scripture, is set forth as a pattern for all subsequent believers. In fact, the New Testament says that we are the children of Abraham by faith and that we are to walk in the steps of the faith of our

father Abraham. Walking in the steps of Abraham's faith means that we behave in our homes as Abraham behaved in his home.

And, in closing, let me just draw a contrast. There was another man who went a long way with Abraham, knew a lot of what Abraham knew and saw a lot of what God did for Abraham. His name was Lot. But when the time came for Abraham and Lot to separate because their flocks and herds were too numerous for them to stay together, Abraham, like the gentleman he was, said to Lot: "You choose whichever way you want to go, I'll go the opposite." And we read that Lot chose to go towards Sodom and that Sodom was a place of extreme sinfulness. Next time we read about Lot, he and his family were inside Sodom and then when we read again about Lot, the judgment of God was about to come on the city. Lot tried desperately to get his sons-in-law and most of his family out and failed. And as he escaped himself and looked back upon the smoldering ruins of Sodom, he realized that many of his family had been destroyed in that ruin and that he was responsible for taking them in.

Fathers, I want to tell you, you may lead your children into Sodom, but you may not be able to lead them out again. What a fearful responsibility rests upon the shoulders of Lot as father that he led his children to a place of sin and ultimate judgment and could not get them out again.

Well, that's all for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. My closing talk on this theme of fatherhood will be on the subject: "When Fathers Fail."

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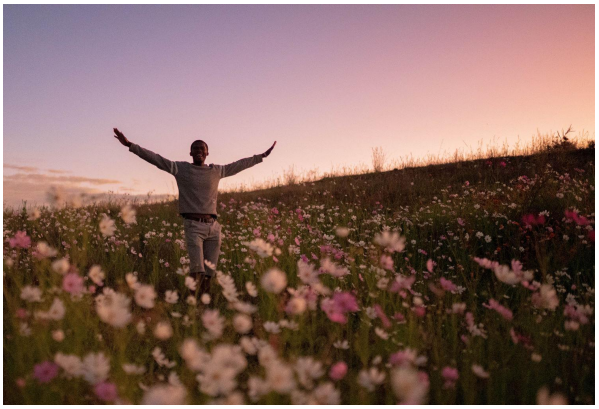

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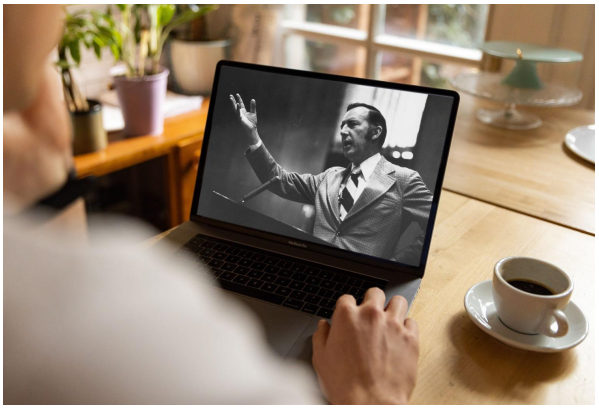

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