

When Fathers Fail



Fatherhood (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again. Throughout this week I've been sharing with you on the theme of "Fatherhood." I've been explaining the three main ministries that each father has in his home: priest, prophet, and king.

In my closing talk on this theme today, I'm going to speak on the subject "When Fathers Fail."

Suppose that a father fails. What happens to his family? Or, suppose that the fathers in a nation fail? What happens to that nation? Because God knew that Abraham would fulfill his duties as a father, God promised that he would become a great and mighty nation. But what about a nation whose fathers do not fulfill their duties.

I'm going to turn, first of all, to Deuteronomy 28. This is a very interesting chapter. In it Moses lists two things. First of all, the blessings that will come upon God's people if they obey Him; secondly, the curses that will come upon them if they disobey God. The first fourteen verses contain the blessings. The remaining verses of the chapter—that's verses 15 through 68—list the curses for disobedience, for not walking in God's way and keeping God's law.

Now there re many remarkable curses listed, but I want to point out just one. In Deuteronomy 28:41, Moses says:

> "Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity." (KJV)

It came to me with a shock one day that not enjoying our children is a curse. And then I began to ask myself, "How many American parents really enjoy their children today?" I was reminded of a pastor, a friend of mine, who had a large family of children, and I remember heading him pray one day, "Lord, help us to remember that children are a blessing and not a burden," and I didn't feel somehow that he was praying with very strong faith.

I don't think today that the majority of American parents really do enjoy their children. Why not? What's the reason? The answer is this: It is a curse for disobedience. God gave children as His greatest blessing that He could give to men and women. But when men and women, fathers and mothers, and especially fathers, do not walk in the way of the Lord,

then than blessing is no longer a blessing.

Moses warns the fathers of Israel that if they do not keep God's way and walk in it, then he says you will not enjoy your children for they shall go into captivity. Well, in these last two decades we have seen millions of American children go into captivity. Captivity of various kinds: satanic captivity, to drugs, to illicit sex, to the occult, and to various types of cults. That's captivity, just as surely as if an invading alien army had come into the country and carried them off prisoners. Why did these millions of American children go into captivity? The answer is given there in the Scripture: Because their fathers failed in their responsibilities. And I want to say the primary responsibility for that state of affairs in modern America rests at the door of American fathers.

We hear a lot about juvenile delinquents. My experience is there hardly are any juvenile delinquents until there are first adult delinquents. It takes adult delinquents to bring forth juvenile delinquents.

I pointed out earlier this week that one of the father's responsibilities to his family was that of a priest. In Malachi 2:7, the Lord states what is required of a priest and I want to read it:

> "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." (NAS)

It is the responsibility of the priest to know the law of the Lord of hosts. It's the responsibility of the priest to know the law of the Lord and to interpret it to the Lord's people. So the priest is the messenger, or perhaps a better word would be representative of the Lord to his people.

This, of course, applies as we have already seen, to the father as priest. His lips should keep knowledge. His children and his family should seek the Lord God at his mouth. He should be God's representative to them. What happens if priests fail in this function? If we turn to Hosea 4:6, God declares what He will do to a family, to a nation, to a civilization, when its priests fail. This is what He says:

> "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." (KJV)

That's a very powerful word to fathers. God says, "I expected you to be the priest of your family, but because you've rejected the knowledge that your family needs, I'm going to reject you. I will no longer accept you as priest and when your priestly ministry on behalf of your children is no longer accepted by Me," then God says, "I will also forget thy children." "Seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." To me that's frightening. To think that God would say to me as a parent, "You've so failed in your responsibilities that I'm going to forget your children. I'm just going to be toward them as if they weren't there. I'm going to write them off. They're of no more consequence and significance before Me."

I would say that this nation of ours, this civilization of ours, is filled with God-forgotten children. Why? Because their fathers did not keep the law of the Lord. Let me say it this way. The father who rejects the knowledge of God's law loses his right to be a priest to his family. When the father's priestly ministry is no longer available, God says, "I will forget your children." That's a very, very solemn thought.

As I bring this message here to a close today, I want to turn to the last two verses of the Old Testament. I don't know whether you've ever reflected on the fact that the last word of the Old Testament in the generally used translation is the word "curse." It's a very solemn thought that if God had no more to say to man after the Old Testament His last word to humanity would have been a curse. Thank God for the New Testament which shows the way out of the curse. This is what God says in these last two verses of the book of Malachi 4:5B6:

> "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (KJV)

I'm impressed by the tremendous insight of prophetic revelation that, looking down through the long telescope of time, the prophet Malachi, well over 2,000 years ago, was able to foresee the greatest and most urgent social problem of our day. In fact, the greatest problem of our day. What is that problem? It's divided, strife-torn homes. Fathers and children out of relationship. The children rebellious. The fathers negligent. And the prophet warns us if this state of affairs does not change, it's going to bring a curse on that unit whether it be a family or a nation or a civilization.

God's Word faces us with just two alternatives in our current situation. We may either restore family relationships and survive, or we may allow family relationships to deteriorate and go the way they've been going the last decades and we

will perish under God's curse. Those are the alternatives. In a very significant sense, the destiny will be settled by the fathers. It's the fathers whom God holds responsible because God could trust Abraham to be the kind of father that He wanted. He said he'll become a great and mighty nation. That the contrary is also true—where fathers fail and do not fulfill their responsibilities, a nation can no longer remain great.

I believe that's the very crisis that confronts our nation today. Are the fathers going to return to God and fulfill their responsibilities to their families in the sight of God, or is the present moral social breakdown which originated in the family and is destroying the family, is that breakdown going to continue and come to its ultimate consequence which is a curse. It will be the decision of the fathers that determines the destiny of the nation. God requires the fathers to turn to the children, then He promises the children will return to their father.

Well, our time is up for now and for this week. I'll be back with you again next week at this time Monday through Friday. Stay tuned now for some important information.

Radio Program

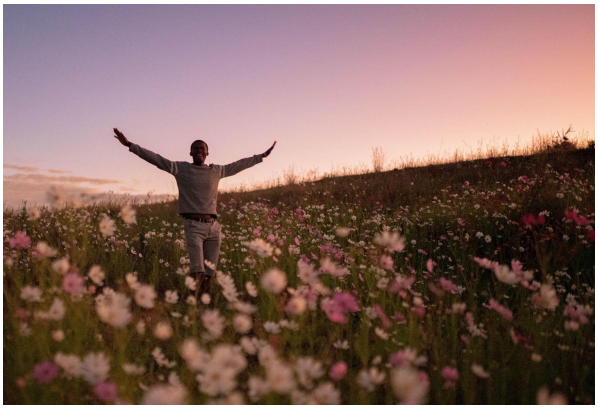
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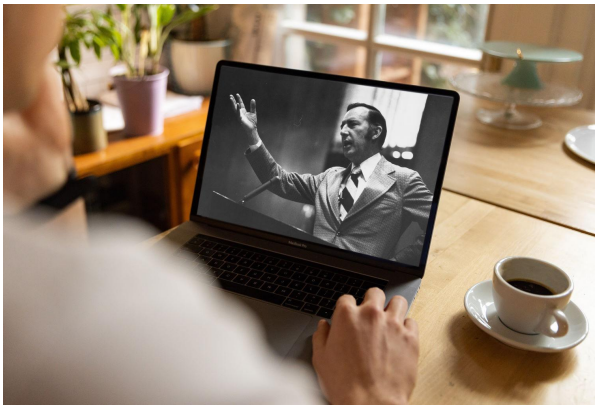
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