

# A Father like Abraham



## What It Means to Be a Man of God (Part 3)
by Derek Prince

Genesis 18, verses 17 and following. The Lord with two angels was on His way to pronounce judgment on Sodom, and He stopped off and was entertained by Abraham. And then the angels moved ahead, but the Lord Himself tarried. It's challenging, to me, that quite unannounced, the Lord visited Abraham's home. And I don't think Abraham had to scurry around, putting everything in order and telling his wife how to behave. He had his home in order. If the Lord should favor your home with a personal visit, would everything be in order, or would you be embarrassed?

Then, the Lord said, in verse 17:

> "Shall I hide from Abraham what I'm doing? [He wanted to share His purposes with Abraham.] Since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him."

Now why? Now, there are a lot of different translations of this verse. But the essence of it is the same. This one says,

> "I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him."

I find that pretty strange English. The Old King James said, "I know him that he will..." and the New American Standard says, "I have chosen..." Actually, it's very hard to say exactly what it means. You could be right and you could be wrong. But that's not the point. The point is why?

> "I have chosen him [or I have known him or I've endorsed him] that he may command his children and his household after him that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring on Abraham what He has promised to Him."

So why? What did God see in Abraham, what did God see in him that caused Him to choose this man to be the father of a special race? First of all, he was a father. And then, he knew that He could trust Abraham to command his children and his household after him. Not to make suggestions. Not to offer a plan. But to make a command. A very unpopular word today. But it's very biblical and it still means exactly what it says. It's

a father's responsibility to impose the discipline of God on his household. And I would like to say in any nation where fathers fail to do that, that nation cannot be or remain great.

Once upon a time, this nation of which I am a member, used to be known as Great Britain. Nowadays very few people bother to put in the "great." It's just Britain. Do you know why it's ceased to be "great"? Because the fathers have failed to fulfill the requirement for a nation to be great. This is not a side issue, this is central to the whole well-being of you, your family and your nation. This is what God is looking for.

Now I'd like to turn, for a moment, to the subject of divorce. And I want to turn to the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, chapter 2. And it's significant that the principles that God's enunciated in Genesis are summed up and endorsed in Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament. God has not changed His plan or His order. In Malachi chapter 2, beginning at verse 15. Now, again, this is a little difficult, with some different translations, but the sense of it comes out.

> "But did not He make them one, having a remnant of the spirit. [He made apparently Adam and Eve one. He could have made more, but He didn't. And why one? Now this is the answer.] He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit and let none deal treacherously with the wife of your youth."

I think "deal treacherously" corresponds to the phrase that I hear now, "cheat on." Let nobody cheat on his wife. Let no one break his marriage covenant because that's something that God detests. For it goes on in the next verse:

> "For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce. [And then it goes on again:] Why did He make them one? Because He seeks godly offspring."

You see, when God looks at marriage, the first thing He looks at is the offspring. What are they going to produce? How will they care for what I've committed to them? My most cherished and choice possession: a child. Are they going to be responsible? Are they going to bring that child up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? He's looking for godly offspring. And there is no question that monogamous marriage—one man with one woman, for life—is the best way to produce godly offspring.

I pastored a small congregation in West London, in Westbourne Grove, in the 1950s, and because we did not have a building that was licensed for marriage, (And you know in this country it's the building that's licensed) some of our people got married in registry offices. And so I found myself several times as a witness in a registrar's office and in every registrar's office throughout this country, as you walked in, there was a notice on the wall that said this: "According to the law of this country, marriage is the union of one man with one woman, for life, to the exclusion of all others." That's as good a biblical definition of marriage as you can find. I can't believe that it's still found in registrar's offices today, I may be wrong. It certainly isn't practiced.

But that was the basic concept of marriage in this country in the 1950s, less than 50 years ago. I want to say it again, because it's so powerful: "According to the law of this country, marriage is the union of one man with one woman, for life, to the exclusion of all others." You could not have a more Biblical definition of marriage. And that's exactly what marriage is. That's what it is. And God hates divorce.

Now, I'm not attacking people who have been divorced because I know, unfortunately, today, there are situations in which sometimes a person really has no other scriptural alternative but divorce. And this is not an attack on them, it's an attack on the system that produces divorces. Today they estimate in America that half of every—50 percent of every marriage will end in divorce. And people shrug their shoulders and go on with their coffee. There's no sense of the enormity of the situation that confronts us.

The root problem is parents are not parenting their children. And the most delinquent is, first and foremost, the men. You see, unfortunately, women's liberation has boomeranged. Women got liberated from their commitment to honor and obey their husbands, but their husbands got liberated from their commitment to stay with one woman. So they get married, the man gets tired of his wife and walks out. He has no more obligations. And the woman is left struggling with one or two or three children to raise on her own. Who's lost? The woman. It's disastrous. I have a deep concern in my heart for single mothers. And I feel, in a way, the church does not do what it should be doing for single mothers. Because pure religion and undefiled before God, James 1:27 says, is to visit the orphans and widows. And the church is not doing that. But let's consider the problem, the source, of the problem. It's divorce. God says, "I hate divorce, because I want godly offspring." And I tell you there's only one solution for juvenile delinquents. You can appoint a commission, you can investigate, you can appoint various government offices and functions—but there's only one solution: it's parents. There's nothing else can produce godly offspring but parents. If we abandon that, we abandon our children to the Destroyer.

It's interesting to me because we looked in Genesis chapter 1 and 2 and 3. We come to Malachi, which is the last book of

the Old Covenant and, in time, much later than the others, and God is still saying the same thing. He hasn't changed His mind. "I'm looking for godly offspring. The union of one man with one woman."

The last two verses of the Old Testament, the end of the Old Testament. I'm so glad there's a New Testament. I'll explain why in a moment. Because this is God speaking. And He says in Malachi 4, verses 5 & 6:

> "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord and he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

Now, Hebrew could put that in various different orders. But in the Hebrew, the last word of the Old Testament is "a curse." And it's the word that means something totally devoted to destruction. That's the last word of the Old Testament. I'm glad there's a New Testament. I wouldn't want God's last word to be a curse. But, he says, unless the fathers and the children are reconciled, that's what will come on the land. And notice who has to turn first.


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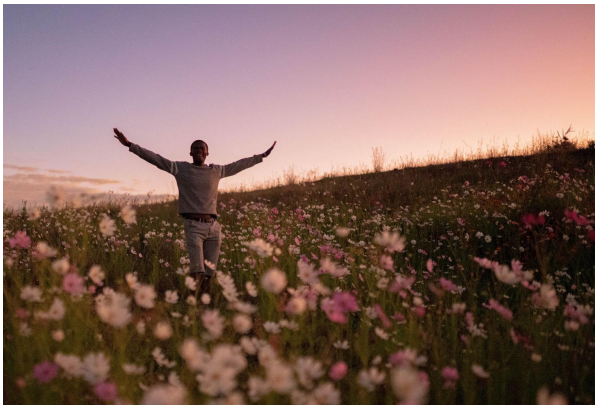

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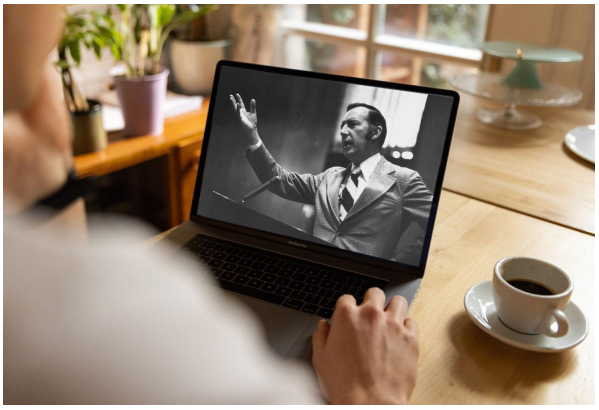

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