

Responsibilities of a Man of God



What It Means to Be a Man of God (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

Malachi 4 verses 5 and 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."

And notice who has to turn first. Did you notice that? It's not the children; it's the fathers. It's those whom God holds primarily accountable. We can complain about Generation X or Next or whatever they call it. We can point out all their faults and problems. But I want to tell you the truth: they're not to blame. It's our generations that are to blame. We are the ones who've betrayed them. We are the ones who have led them astray. We are the ones who have failed to present the truth to them. We are the ones who have failed to impose godly discipline. Now God is going to judge us through the children. And, I mean, they can move in and take over in a little while and make life very unpleasant for us—unless we do something about it.

I believe in a home, raising children, there are two primary requirements: Number one is love, number two is discipline. And neither of them works properly without the other. Discipline without love produces probably rebels. But love without discipline produces irresponsible people.

Ruth and I are the head of a family of 12 adopted children. We may not look like it, but that's what we are. And there are about 150 members in our family today. So I'm not without some measure of experience. And I would like to say, and I have to be careful I don't become too personal, I have observed children who were excessively indulged by their parents and basically they've all had a difficult life. So the way to make your child happy is not to spoil your child—not to give them all they ask, do everything they want, turn around at every request. If you teach your children this way, what will probably happen is they will go into life expecting life to treat them that way. And life doesn't. How many of you know that? Life is pretty tough. And it's not getting any less tough, either.

So, in order to raise successful children, we have to combine love and discipline. Unfortunately, that's a rare combination today. Our problem is delinquent males. And it expresses itself in unparented children. And that becomes a landslide which will ultimately become an avalanche. No matter how many computers we may have. No matter how many fancy cars we may drive. No matter how much property we may invest in. Ultimately, it's all going to blow up in our face. Unless we deal with the basic spiritual issues: which are fathers and their children. We can try to skirt around it, but we will not. There's a destiny that catches up with people. We can slight and ignore the laws of God for a time and get away with it, and seem to prosper. But, ultimately, God catches up with us.

I just want to go on from what it means to be a man to what it means to be a man of God. But you can't be a man of God if you don't know what it means to be a man. That's the first requirement.

Now, I just want to, very briefly, point out two of the qualifications or requirements of elders. And I want you to see in each case an elder is required to rule. 1 Timothy chapter 3, verses 2 through 4. Paul says:

> "A bishop [but it's much better to say 'an overseer'] must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous, one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence."

So the ultimate requirement of an elder is that he rules his own house well. And if he doesn't do that, he's not qualified to be an elder. And then, speaking about elders, in the same epistle, chapter 5, verse 17, Paul says:

> "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine."

So one element in being a man of God is being able to rule, qualified to rule, and willing to rule. And in our contemporary culture that will not always make you popular, by any means. In fact, if you want popularity, stay away from being an elder. But if you want God's approval, then it's a good thing to be an elder. You have to decide, very often, whether you want popularity or God's approval. People who are motivated by a desire for popularity can never become strong, stable Christians.

Now I just want to say a word about the word that's translated rule. The real meaning of this word is to stand out in front of. So a bishop, an elder, must stand out in front of his family. That combines two concepts: to lead and to protect. And that is the responsibility of a father in his family, the responsibility of an elder in a church. To stand out in front. To show the way. To walk ahead. And to encounter the adversary. So that when the adversary strikes, the elder or the father is the one who deals with him. Now, that is a responsibility of a man of God. It's to stand in front, stand out in front, of his family. That when the blows come, they touch you first.

Somebody once asked a well-known preacher, "Is so-and-so a good Christian?" And he answered, "I can't tell you yet; I haven't met his wife!" You see, the wife is the glory of the husband. So, you can tell what sort of man he is, by what sort of glory his wife has. If the wife is secure and tranquil and diligent, she's his glory. But if she's distraught and nervous and continually under pressure, it's his fault. He should have been "standing out in front."

And I've just come now to this particular situation in relationship to my wife, who has been through a siege of different kinds of sicknesses. And I was very concerned for her, but I didn't know what to do. And in a sense, I think I was like Adam. I was delinquent. I just let it all happen. I didn't protect the garden. I let the serpent pass in. This is metaphorical, you understand. And God, through the Scriptures that I'm giving you now, began to speak to me. And He said, "You're not fulfilling your job! Your wife's condition is largely your responsibility." And I said, "Lord, what can I do? I pray. I really am concerned. We love one another. We share everything together. What am I lacking?" I said, "What do I have to do?" And I got a very simple answer, almost simplistic. "The prayer of faith will save the sick." And I said, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" He said, "Pray the prayer of faith." And I didn't feel any faith. I didn't have any tremendous inspiration and I thought, Lord, I'll do my best to be obedient. So I began to say, "Lord, I pray the prayer of faith on behalf of my wife." The answers haven't all come, but the change has taken place. We're moving in a different direction.

Now that was an expensive lesson. I have a totally new sense of responsibility for my wife. And that doesn't mean everything is necessarily going to be all right from now until the Lord comes, but it has shown me a new dimension to what it means to be a man of God. If you're married, and if you're planning to get married or hoping to get married,

remember your wife should be your glory.

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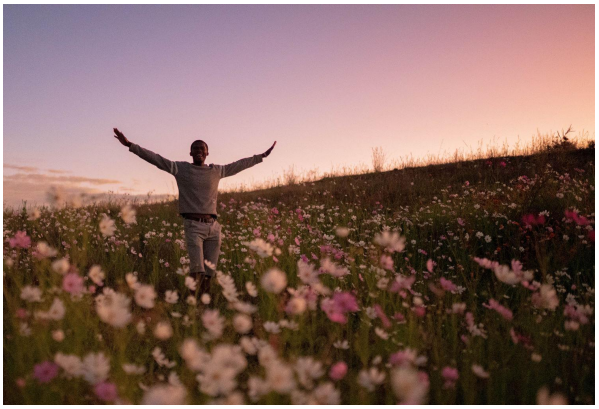

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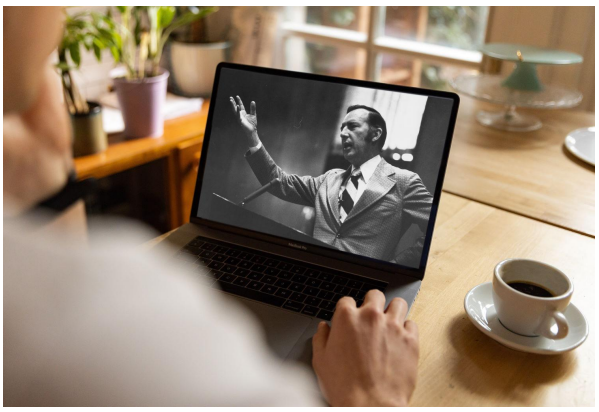

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