

Interview With Derek Prince (Part 3)



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by Derek Prince

Geoff Buck: That message on Fatherhood is one I know that's near and dear to you. I think you were probably taught much by the Lord directly not having been able to be raised with your father, but in boarding schools. What does that message of Fatherhood mean to you?

Derek Prince: I think it's the most desperate need of modern America. In fact it's the most desperate need of contemporary "Western Culture". I think the failure of fathers and the breakdown of fatherhood is the root cause of all the misery that we see in the world today. And I see countless young people streaming in our streets and our cities, wandering to and fro, looking in shop windows, and I see them and I say to myself, "What they're really looking for, although they don't know it, is a father." And believe me if the church will raise up men who can be godly, sincere, loving fathers, the young people will flock to them. Because that's a void in their life. Many of them don't even know that the void is there, it's so deep, it's been there so long.

Of course, as you know, I mean I really was in many ways a fatherless young person. My father was a good man. He was an officer in the British Army. He took care of all my physical and material needs, etc. etc. But he himself had never been fathered I realize. And I don't think he knew what it was to be a father. He never took me on his knee. In my family we loved one another, but we never told each other that we did. It would have been embarrassing to do that. We were governed by the creed of the "stiff upper lip." Of course I've see my own British people and I see millions enslaved by that same creed still today. I believe there's coming a breakthrough in Britain where that "stiff upper lip" culture will be broken.

As you know I became a father in an unorthodox way. When I married my first wife I got eight children, eight daughters in one day. When I married thirty or more years later when I married Ruth, my second wife, I got three more adopted children. And in between Lydia and I adopted one other African little girl. So I am adoptive father to twelve adopted children of whom nine are Jewish, one is a Palestinian Arab, one is African and one is English. And I would have to say God didn't give me a lot of training. He just threw me in in the deep end and said "Swim." And I've swum, but sometimes I've been near to going down. But I have come in that rather

unorthodox route to understand the desperate need that people have for a father.

Geoff Buck: What happened in America that the father's abdicated in such an incredibly strong way that we saw the rebels of the sixties? What, are you aware of what happened?

Derek Prince: I certainly can't explain it all, but I think materialism and personal ambition have a lot to do with it. Making a big salary, getting a big house, having a swimming pool, driving a certain kind of car, kind of egoistic personal ambition. After all, it's not easy to be a father. You know there's a German proverb that says, [saying in German]. "To become a father is not difficult, [German] but to be one, very." That says it like it is. And it's much easier to ignore your children. Let them go. Be extravagant in what you give to them. Do anything but really love them and discipline them. It takes a lot of effort to discipline children. I'm , one of my primary aims is to challenge men to be real fathers.

Geoff Buck: Speaking of that you have the new book Husbands and Fathers. Talk about that. How did that book come about?

Derek Prince: Well it came out of my, just what I've been describing to you. I saw such desperate need for men to step in and take their roll. I don't primarily lay the blame at the door of the women, but on the other hand many women have moved in and usurped positions which were not designed for women. And it creates a lot of problems. One thing I think it does is an overbearing masculine type mother produces a son who's very prone to become homosexual. I think that's one of the causes of the up growth of homosexuality.

Geoff Buck: When it came to the book Husbands and Fathers when you wrote it was it an emotional experience for you to consider your own parenting—what you'd done right, what you'd done wrong? Was that an emotional book to write?

Derek Prince: It was out of my emotions. But I felt in a way almost God dictated it to me. I've never written any book that I felt so clearly God gave me exactly what to say. The most emotional part in the book is the last part, the last chapter where I refer briefly to experience in which I, for the first time in my life, came to know God personally as my Father, after more than fifty years in full-time Christian ministry. And then I speak about an experience when my second wife, Ruth, was called home and I was at the grave in the cemetery and I was feeling so totally desolate. And I stepped forward and said in a loud voice in the present of all the people, "Thank you, Father. I believe what you do is always right. You never make a mistake. You're always kind." And I couldn't have said that if I hadn't had that personal encounter with God as my Father. But that carried me through one of the most difficult periods of my life.

One of the things I laid hold of was, "All things work together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to His purpose." So it's not our business to find out whether it's working together for good. Our business is to find out am I called, am I walking in God's purpose. Because if I am than everything that happened is good for me.

Geoff Buck: Now you mentioned Ruth's home-going which of course was in December 1998. What did you experience in yielding a second wife to the Lord? What did you learn about grief and death and…?

Derek Prince: Well, I would say first of all the two hardest experiences of my life without any doubt are the home call of Lydia and then the home call of Ruth. Nothing else that I've been through can be compared with those for the intensity of suffering. But out of it all I've come to trust God as my Father and God has opened a well of compassion in me. I think it's strange, but really we can't help people who are suffering very much until we've suffered ourselves.

I'll tell you how it came about. One of the things I learned when Ruth was called home was how many people loved me. I mean, I got letters from all over the world. People whose names I didn't know just saying, "We love you. We're praying for you." And when I got one of these letters from a lady she quoted Psalm 84 verse 6, "When you pass through the Valley of Baca you open, a spring is opened, a fountain and the rain, the latter rain fills the pools." And when I was reading that I could not read any further for an hour. I was just totally taken over by that realization that God was opening a fountain in me. And He has. He opened a fountain that was never there before. It's a fountain of compassion. It's not my compassion. It's God's compassion. It's unlike anything else I've experienced and I'm very jealous of it. I continually ask God to protect it and to keep it pure.

But I find when that compassion begins to flow through me it attracts people to me. They don't know why they're drawn, but there's something there that they're longing for. And in a sense I have to be rather discreet because it gives me power. When you deal with people in compassion you can get them to do almost anything. And I've learned you have to be very careful it's not self-centered.

Geoff Buck: The other things that amazes those of us who have had the privilege of knowing you to some extent is that you continue to be flexible and to grow. For example when I was privileged to attend Ruth's memorial service here in the United States and was going to see you for the first time, I

didn't know what kind of man I would meet. I didn't know if you'd be stuck in grief, I didn't know if you would go into seclusion, and you came out of it with two things. Number one tears. Your heart and your compassion is evident. But the second thing that has so blessed me is you are continuing to minister, to write, to grow, to speak. How does a person at age eighty-four continue to grow and to develop?

Derek Prince: Well, I say this. When you're too old to learn, you're too old. And when you're too old to change, you're too old. And I've, by the grace of God, I think I've kept myself. I'm still willing to learn, I'm learning every day, more and more wonderful exciting things about God. And I'm changing every day. And I have to say in my grief I've seen the goodness of people in a way I never saw it before. My own family first and foremost. Ecclesiastes says, "Cast your bread upon the waters, and after many days it will return to you." And I devoted my life to these girls who were fatherless. Now it's come back to me. I mean I could not ask for people to do more for me than my family are doing.

Radio Program

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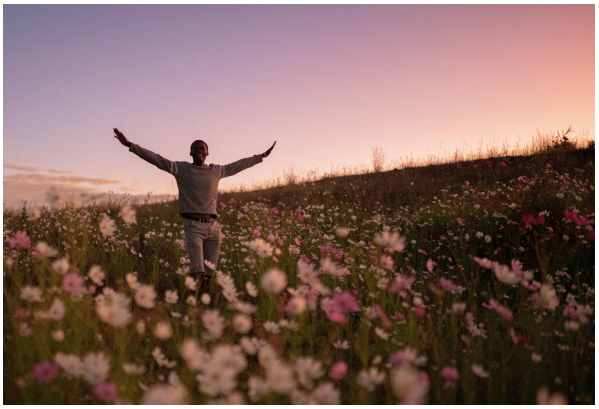

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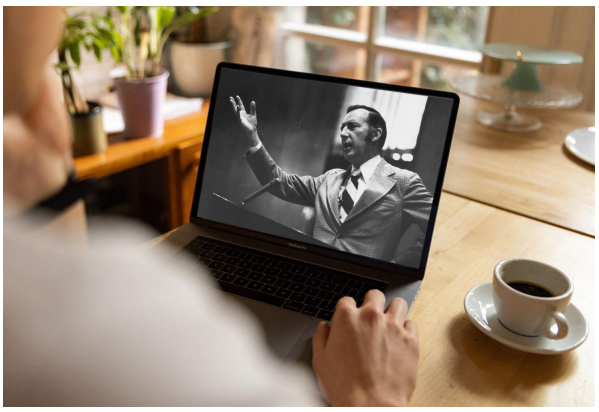

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