

July 17, 2011

**Main Idea: Fathers nurture their children.**

- **Intro pic**
  - Very inadequate in myself, very confident in God and His Gospel
- **Fathers, you must nurture your children in a Gospel-driven way**
  - **Gospel-driven fathers embrace their God-given role**

Paul addresses "Fathers"

    - Obviously Biblical parenting includes mothers (team), but he uses the word "fathers" here and "parents" as Vs 1
    - Eph 5.22-33 - Just as head of wife, is head of household
    - Primary responsibility – headship
      - Only 2 commands instructing parents NT, addresses Fathers
      - Wives, seek to compliment and make husband successful
    - Given significant influence
      - Practical – Swiss study in Touchstone Magazine 2003
        - Fathers non-practicing + Mothers regular = 2%
        - Fathers regular + mothers non-practicing = 44%
      - Father's influence is overwhelming
        - "When the father is absent or passive, the family withers, and the ability to pass the baton of faith to the next generation is greatly weakened"
        - (Farley, 131)
    - Fathers, there is a call on your life
    - You must recognize and embrace your God-given role
    - You must nurture your children
  - **Gospel-driven fathers apply the Gospel to themselves**

Impossible to nurture well apart from the Gospel  
The Gospel to fathering is like engine to airplane or fuel to a vehicle (Story/Illustration)

    - Cincy to Madison (441 mi)
    - Gospel drives, propels, is necessary

Eph 2.1-10 We were once desperately in need of God's miraculous intervention toward us in Christ

Eph 5.1 In Christ we are made children of God

    - The heart that yearns for Christ will become more like Christ
      - ...and will live more like Christ would
      - ...and will parent in a Christ-like way
    - Get to know God in all His glory
      - Spend regular/daily time with Him
    - Regularly reflect on the Gospel
- **Story/Illustration: My family testimony of the Gospel and my father**
  - When God breaks into families through fathers, there are generational ramifications
  - Fathers, you must nurture your children in a Gospel-driven way
  - Fathers, through intimate fellowship, consistent time with God, get to know God and grow in Christlikeness
  - Result: fathers will gradually look more like Christ.

Actions follow affections.

- **Fathers, you must nurture your children by not provoking them to anger**
  - **Gospel-driven fathers risk provoking children to anger by not fathering God's way**
  - What is anger: God-given response by which we can respond appropriately to the things God hates. – be angry, irritated, upset at murder, sexual sin, etc.
  - What is provoking:
    - Can't control emotional response in children
    - Momentary anger as a result of godly discipline is legitimate (see context)
      - Stirring our children when we seek to cause illegitimate or unnecessary anger
        - By what we say, do or don't do (neglect)
        - Physical abuse, constant ridicule, no room failure, apathy/neglect
        - Inevitable when father apart from Gospel or Scriptural principles
        - Illust: Momentary anger in response to discipline for lying is legitimate/necessary risk; Anger in response to punishment far exceeding the disobedience is illegitimate
          - I sin by provoking to anger when I do this
        - Not just my actions, but also my passivity
          - Neglect to help children handle anger (sharing toys or adult inter-personal relationships) will train up to angry lifestyle
          - Must intervene in training years to prevent angry lifestyle
        - By setting an angry example
          - How we drive (road rage) will probably be how our children drive
  - Why does he focus on anger? - not laziness, dishonesty, anything distracting from Christ
    - Within context: Fathers who provoke anger
      - Paint a wrong picture of God
        - Vs 1 related to obedience: Fathers can be overbearing if not careful
        - How can a child trust God if their perception of Him is based on a cruel earthly father?
          - Earthly fathers are picture of Heavenly Father
      - Rob children of joy in Christ
        - Primary Goal: point children to Christ that they would glorify and enjoy God
        - Sinful anger competes with joy
        - An angry lifestyle in our children prevents them from delighting in God
      - Hinders God-honoring obedience (vs 1)
        - May wrongly fear and rebel
        - Worse, look good on outside but grow to hate and resent fathers

- God cares more deeply about the heart in obedience than any action we perform
- What is the end goal?
  - That our children glorify God by handling anger appropriately**
  - As above, apply Gospel to self and model Gospel living.
    - Children will prob adopt how we handle anger
    - Remember, have incredible God-given influence
  - Follow and teach God's principles
    - Deal with anger promptly (Eph 4.26-27)
    - Put off bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander and malice and put on kindness, tenderheartedness and forgiveness (Eph 4.31-32). Model it yourself.
- **Summary**
  - **Fathers, you must nurture your children**
  - **Fathers, you must nurture your children in a Gospel-driven way**
  - **Fathers, you must nurture your children by not provoking them to anger**
- **Application**
  - Reflect regularly on God's Fatherly qualities and pray them into your parenting
  - Reflect regularly on the Gospel and seek to apply it to everyday living
  - Explicitly include the Gospel when disciplining children