



Session 1 – Essential Fatherhood

1. Fatherhood is necessary

- a. The absence or abdication of a father is far more determinative than either a mother's absence or her attempts to hyper-competence to make up for the father's weaknesses or absence.
- b. Some key biblical texts: Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1–4; Col. 3:20–21; Deut. 6:4–9; Heb. 12:9

2. Fatherhood is reflective

- a. Fatherhood reflects the person, the priorities and purposes of God himself: "The family is an analogy of the cosmos. God intends for children to learn about his fatherhood by this analogy first." (Wilson, *Father Hunger*. 53).
- b. "Fathers are speaking about God the Father constantly. They do not have the option of shutting up. What they are saying may be true or false, but they are not in a position where they can refuse to say anything. A father who just sits and stares, a father who is down at the office all the time, a father who deserts the family, a father who just donated sperm at the sperm bank, all of them are speaking. Every one of them is saying something all the time" (Wilson, 53).
- c. God's authority: "*Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?*" (Heb. 12:9).
- a. God's love: "*As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust*" (Psa. 103:13–14).

3. Fatherhood is difficult

- a. *“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord”* (Eph. 6:4).
- b. *“Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged”* (Col. 3:21).

4. Fatherhood has God’s sanction and full support

- a. *“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you”* (Ex. 20:12).
- b. *“The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures”* (Prov. 30:17).

5. Fatherhood requires immediate attention

- a. Our way forward is paved by faith and repentance. Faith to take up the Word of God in growing obedience, and repentance over fruitless desires and fears that hinder us.

Resources:

Duties of Parents, J.C. Ryle

- Read this book through this course – then answer two questions (with some length and specificity, *involving wife*), and then meet with an older, mature Christian father to discuss:
 1. What is the present health and state of my fatherhood?
 2. What are the specific actions the Lord is commanding me to grow as a father?

Raising Children God’s Way, Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Gospel Powered Parenting, William Farley

Biblical Discipline That Makes Children Fun! William Farley

Father Hunger, Douglas Wilson

It’s Good to be A Man, Michael Foster