

Father's Day 2025

Happy Father's Day.

About a month ago, on Mother's Day, I made several recommendations for mothers and prospective mothers. As they say, "What's good for the goose is good for the gander." So today I'll be making similar recommendations for fathers and for prospective fathers.

Just like many modern women, men today are delaying parenthood later than previous generations. Men today, on average, become fathers at about 30 years old. That's several years older than what was common in previous generations. Over the last several decades, both men and women have been steadily postponing parenthood.

Why are men postponing fatherhood? There are a variety of reasons. Some want to get their career on track before getting married and having kids. They want financial stability before marriage. Others want to sow their wild oats and enjoy freedom and fun before settling down. Some are finding it hard to find a suitable wife. Others simply don't want to make the commitments and or take on responsibilities necessary to be good fathers. They are commitment-averse. Some young men continue to act like adolescents well into the 30s; they are too immature to become fathers.

I read that about one-quarter of all men are *not* fathers by the age of 44. That's apparently an all-time high for that statistic. Many men are far more focused on career and personal pleasure than they are on creating a family.

As I said a few weeks ago, Christians cannot simply imitate what is common in the culture. The fact that many men are avoiding fatherhood, delaying fatherhood, and having small families does not mean that Christian men should follow that pattern. The modern pattern is not normal, it is not sustainable, and it is not Christian.

Today is Father's Day, and we want to celebrate those men who follow the *biblical* pattern for fathers.

I'd like to make several recommendations regarding fatherhood. Some of these recommendations pertain particularly to young men who could potentially become fathers, and some pertain to those who are already fathers. And I think all of these are biblical, Christian, reasonable recommendations regarding fatherhood.

- I. Assume that you are going to be a father.
 - A. I'm obviously addressing this recommendation to young men who are not yet fathers but who could become fathers in the foreseeable future.
 - B. All things being equal, most men become fathers. 60% of adult men are fathers. Only 25% of men never become fathers. So the majority of men will become fathers at some point.
 - C. Why should Christian men should prepare to be fathers?
 1. The normal pattern we find in the Bible is that young men get married and start a family. Sometimes it does not work out that way, but most of the time it does.

Gen 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Jesus approved of that pattern—he quoted that verse (Mt 19:5).

Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The biblical, Christian assumption is that men get married and produce children. *They leave, cleave, and conceive.* That's the normal pattern. And most Christians men want to follow that pattern.

Some men do not get married because they don't want to; they want to remain single, and that's fine. Other men would like to get married and have kids, but in the providence of God, that never happens. But the most common pattern is that men get married and become fathers. Most Christian men want that.
 2. The Bible uniformly praises having children; it's good to have children; it's good to have many children.

Ps 127:5 *Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: ...*

Trans: So unless they fit into the minority of cases, most of the young men here will eventually get married and their wives will have children. If you are a male, you should assume that that's what will happen to you. It might not, but it probably will, and you should prepare yourself for that outcome.

Young Christian men today must intentionally avoid the self-centered, self-indulgent, immature attitude so common in our world today. Many young men today avoid fatherhood because they fear commitment and sacrifice. Their primary concern is personal pleasure and self-indulgence. That's not how a Christian man thinks. Fatherhood is a wonderful vocation, and we want to promote it and encourage young men to assume that they will become fathers.

Trans: Since that is the case, the next recommendation is to...

II. Prepare for fatherhood.

Under the biblical model, you should not have children until you are married. So if marriage is a requirement, what kind of things could you do to prepare for marriage?

- A. Work on yourself first. Work on being a marriageable person. Work on becoming that kind of person that a good woman would want to marry.

If a godly, eligible bachelorette suddenly showed up, would she be interested in you? Is there anything about you that she would find attractive? Would she think of you as a potential option for her husband and the father of her children?

That's what young people of marriageable age ought to be thinking about—"Am I the kind of person that anyone would seriously consider marrying? Do I have the qualities and the characteristics that a godly Christian person would want to have in a spouse?" If you want to get married, you have to make yourself marriageable.

- B. Some things about yourself you can't control or change, but other things you can both control and change. If you want to marry a good woman, you have to be thinking of what a good woman would be looking for in a husband. What if she shows up and you are not ready?

- C. The Bible presents the ideal wife in Prov 31. We don't have that same sort of description for men; there is not a Virtuous Man passage. But we find several biblical principles that pertain to men. Just like a godly Christian man would be looking for the Prov 31 Virtuous Woman, a godly Christian woman would be looking for a virtuous man. What does a virtuous man look like?
1. He's a man of God.
 - a) He's saved; he's a Christian. A godly woman wants to marry a godly man.
 - b) He has a proper fear of God. He's reverent and godly. He has a high commitment to the things of God.
 2. He's masculine.
 - a) True masculinity is not the typical idea promoted by Hollywood movies.
 - b) True masculinity is really Christ-likeness. Jesus provides a good example of biblical masculinity.
 - c) No godly woman wants to marry an effeminate man, an irresponsible man, a lazy man, a man with no prospects.
 3. He can provide for the family. He needs to have enough income to pay the bills and care for a wife and potentially a child or two. It may make sense for a man to secure a good job before seeking a wife. He has to be in a position to provide for a family.
 4. He can protect the family. The husband/father is responsible to protect his wife and kids.
 5. He's gentle and loving to his wife.

1 Pet 3:7 *Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel...*
 6. He's a leader; he leads his wife and children with both authority and love. And he leads the home spiritually as well. Many men leave the spiritual leadership up to the wife; that's not right.

Josh 24:15 *As for me and my house...*

He provides a good example for his wife and children to follow.

7. This kind of man is what the Prov 31 Virtuous Woman is looking for. If you want a Virtuous Woman, then you should be a virtuous man.

If you lack these qualities, you can work on developing them. Maybe a potential wife won't come along until you have developed these qualities. Work on becoming husband material. Work on becoming the kind of man a Virtuous Woman would find attractive.

So it makes sense that, if you want to get married and become a father, you take the steps necessary to make yourself as attractive to a good woman as possible. Make yourself marriageable.

Further, I think it's true that women are not as interested in personal appearance as what men are. Men find beauty very appealing, while women find personal character more appealing. Women are *more* interested in your personality, your honesty, kindness, intelligence, and confidence than they are in how you look. A godly woman is interested in your Christian virtues and character qualities. So if you have those inner qualities, you are attractive godly woman even if you are not very handsome.

Red Green: "If the women don't find you handsome, at least let them find you handy." You don't have to be handsome to be appealing to a godly woman.

Let the women find you mature, honest, and kind. A sense of humor is often important to women. And of course a Christian woman is looking for strong Christian virtues and commitments.

And then once you find the right woman...

III. Get married.

- A. Once you found a good woman, get a ring and pop the question.

- B. *Before* you become a father, get married. The prerequisite to child bearing is marriage. It's a sad fact that today many young men have children outside of marriage. They don't bother getting married before having children. That violates the biblical model; that's sin.
- C. The requirement for Christian marriage is that each person is a Christian. The Bible clearly prohibits Christians from marrying non-Christians—no unequal yokes. So you should have an unbreakable conviction that you will not marry an unbeliever; you will date and marry only a fellow believer.

BTW, the purpose of dating is marriage—to find a marriage partner.

- D. And marriage works best when both partners have the same values, attitudes, and standards. In other words, it's best to marry someone with whom you agree spiritually and morally—the same faith and practice. It's best to marry someone within your own religious tradition, someone with whom you agree regarding how to live the Christian life. You don't want friction regarding practical, daily lifestyle choices.

There are a wide variety of Christians in this world. Fellow Christians may potentially disagree about a lot of things. It's not enough that the person claims to be a Christian. You want to find someone with whom you agree about most things, especially the most important issues of life—family life, church, money, lifestyle. Find a girl who has the same viewpoint on these things.

Marrying someone who disagrees with you on fundamental issues of life is not a good idea. Opposites don't attract for very long.

And don't think that you can change the other person.

Where do you find the virtuous woman? Church, Christian college/Bible school, family connections/recommendations, friends, even dating apps. If you are not meeting the right kind of people, you might extend your search. You can enlist others to help you find the right one.

- E. One of the great dangers for Christian men is the temptation to compromise your values in order to secure a wife. If you are unable to find a Prov 31 Virtuous Woman, then you might be tempted to settle for any girl who is willing to date you. But such compromise can result in long-term unhappiness and dissatisfaction.

You want to find a godly Christian woman who will be a good wife and mother. Don't settle for some girl who seems to like you and who is available but has significant problems or spiritual weaknesses. Don't settle for a non-virtuous woman.

Many women today have significant "baggage" that you would not want to deal with—damage from previous relationships, experiences.

- F. On the other hand, you have to be realistic. There is no perfect woman. If there were a perfect woman, she probably would not be interested in you. It's most likely that you will find a woman much like yourself; an average guy will most likely find an average girl. If you are above average, maybe you'll find an above average girl. If you are very fortunate, you might find someone better than yourself. But if you are not Prince Charming, you are probably not going to marry Cinderella.

Trans: If your intent is to get married, you have to be realistic and reasonable. Don't compromise your standards, but have realistic expectations.

IV. Have children.

- A. Once you get married, have children. Fathers, by definition, have children. That's what makes you a father—you have kids. The assumption should be that you will have children. It's between you and God how many you have and when you'll have them, but you should plan to have them.

Ps 127:3, 5 Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: ...

- B. You should avoid the modern, secular idea that you'll get married and not have children. Modern couples often avoid having children so they can spend their time and money on themselves. They see children as an expensive, painful, messy inconvenience. That's not a Christian viewpoint. Christians should see children as a great privilege and a stewardship.

Malachi 2:15 ... *[God] seeks godly offspring.* ...

Children certainly are, in many cases, expensive, painful, messy, and inconvenient. But I'm convinced that many of the problems people have with their children are due to poor parenting, not to bad children. Bratty kids usually come from parents who fail in their parenting responsibilities.

- C. In the providence of God, some couples cannot bear children naturally. In that case, there are other options ...
1. Some couples adopt. I think of this as the best option for many couples.
 2. Some couples opt for technological assistance in helping their fertility. E.g., IVF. I am not an advocate of IVF; there are significant moral problems associated with this technology.
 3. One thing to definitely avoid is surrogacy. Renting another woman's womb is not really a Christian practice.

Trans: Once you get married, in the providence of God, you have children. That's what makes you a father after all.

V. Raise your children properly.

- A. Fathers in particular have a tremendous set of responsibilities. God holds the father responsible for what happens in his household.

What are some of these responsibilities for fathers?

1. Provide for the physical needs of the children. Parents are responsible for food, shelter, clothing, medical treatment, etc. Fathers usually provide for the needs of his wife and children. If you can't do that, you are probably not ready to get married and have kids.
2. Provide for the spiritual needs of the children.

Deut 6:6-7 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children,

Ps 78:5 For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children.

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.

Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Fathers are ultimately responsible for the spiritual character of their households. Fathers are obligated train their children how to behave properly and discipline them when they misbehave.

A little advice regarding child discipline:

Be consistent. Set the rules and then enforce them. Don't make empty threats. Punish disobedience quickly and consistently.

Be the authority. Tell the child what to do and expect him to do it. If he disobeys, quickly impose suitable consequences.

Don't ask permission, explain, or coax the child. Tell the child what to do, praise him when he obeys, and punish if he disobeys.

Restraining your children is one of your primary responsibilities.

1 Samuel 3:13 *I have told [Eli] that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and **he did not restrain them.***

Don't allow the child to become the center of the family. The parents are the center, not the children. The parents train the child to obey the parents. The family should be parent-centered, not child-centered.

3. Provide for the education of the child.

Education is a major responsibility that parents must take seriously. I would urge Christian parents to avoid the public schools if at all possible. Public schools are a disaster these days, both educationally and morally.

4. Prepare the child for adulthood.

When the children approach adulthood, we have to ease them out of the nest slowly. The goal should be that our children are prepared to take on adult responsibilities when they leave the home. By the time your children leave home, they should be prepared for adult life.

VI. Enjoy family life.

Ps 128:3 *Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.*

A. The picture of contentment and prosperity for our ancient forefathers was having a fruitful wife and having children gathered around your table. The image is that of happy family life—a man and his wife and their children gathered around a table enjoying a meal together. That's still the ideal picture we should be seeking.

B. Most people want a happy family life. We naturally seek the blessings of home and family.

If you have a happy family life, you should count your blessings. A happy family is a rather rare thing these days in our culture.

- C. Some men will *not* have that kind of family life; they will not get married or have children. Some don't want to get married; some would not want to settle down into domestic life. They could not imagine having a wife and children. Some are not cut out to be fathers. That's fine; perhaps God has something else for them.
- D. But today, on Father's Day, we want to celebrate the ideal Christian family—a husband and wife enjoying life with their children. For the majority of people, that's what life is all about. Family is the center of happiness and fulfillment.

Prov 5:18 *Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.*

Ec 9:9 *Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life ... for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.*

On Father's Day, we want to encourage fathers and potential fathers to retain the biblical viewpoint on fatherhood. If you follow God's pattern in this area, it's very likely that you can enjoy fatherhood and family life.

If you are a prospective father—if fatherhood might happen to you within the next 10 years—you should prepare for it. Make yourself into someone who would be a good father. If you want to find a good wife, make yourself into the kind of person that a virtuous woman would find attractive.

If you are already a father, work on fulfilling your biblical responsibilities as a father. Perhaps the most important thing you can do is to provide a good example for your children to follow. Strive to be the man of God that God expects you to be. Love your wife and your children.

Joshua said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." That's the key to success for fathers—put God first, serve Him, and trust Him for the outcome.

I hope that all fathers can live joyfully and rejoice in their fatherhood and in their families today.