

Father's Day 2017

2 Timothy 2:1-7

1. The soldier

2. The athlete

3. The farmer

Wives, children, look at your husbands and fathers for a moment. Are you blessed!

In prisons in Brazoria and Harris County, I've met dozens of men. None began life with the goal of incarceration. Almost all began life without a father being present. Their moms were often around, but often addicted to a substance, or addicted to the idea of having a man in their life, men who brought abuse and violence into these families. As a result, our cities are overflowing with those who spent their formative years without fathers, without stable families, and without Jesus Christ. Children raised like this often aimlessly drift through a life filled with bad choices and broken dreams.

POWERPOINT SLIDE 2 Dads, families. I want you to hear this very carefully. The author Bruce Wilkinson gave us the picture of three chairs. Three chairs that represent families in church today. ***Discuss the 3 chairs and the idea of going from Chair 2 to Chair 3.*** I want every dad to make an honest assessment of where you are today. Chair 1, Commitment, Chair 2, Compromise, or Chair 3, Conflict.

POWERPOINT SLIDE 3 Dads, I want to give you a biblical plan for being the best father you can be. Our scripture for today is 2 Timothy 2:1-7. Here it is.

So we see the apostle Paul giving heartfelt advice to a young man. And he breaks it down into two groups of three. Fathers, evaluate yourself on these as we talk today.

POWERPOINT SLIDE 4 First, be strong, teach others, expect suffering. To that I only have one question...Who has your children's ear? Is the world's message louder than yours? Is your message right? Paul wants Timothy to show strength, preach Christ as he was taught, and expect to be opposed. Isn't it the same for us today? I hate to break the news to you, but the world wants your kids. And for some of you, their message is stronger than yours. It's coming at you with a vengeance these days. The world wants your children to turn away from Jesus Christ. Are you strong enough, passionate enough, disciplined enough not to let that happen?

I want to give you three ways to do that. Three ideas. The soldier, the athlete, and the farmer.

Now you might say "I've never been any of these." Never enlisted. Never played anything more than Frisbee. Don't have a green thumb. But let's look at these three ideas. We can take qualities that will help us be better fathers, husbands, and men.

First...the soldier doesn't get entangled in civilian affairs. He obeys his commanding officer.

POWERPOINT SLIDE 5 George Patton put it this way, carefully sanitized for church. Practice your faith regularly. Be alert. Obey God in all that you do. Your message must be powerful in words AND powerful in action. Because you're alert you know where the enemy lurks. You know where compassion must be shown. You know where to show kindness, because you're sensitive to others. Your wife responds to your leadership because you're sensitive to her needs. Your children respond to your leadership because you're sensitive to them. You're not entangled in other affairs. Your wife is not a golf widow. Your children are not marveling at your 6 hour video gaming prowess. When you're

home, you're home. Are you with me? Every man here today, give yourself a thumbs up or a thumbs down on this one. Are you alert? Are you not entangled? Up or down.

Next, the athlete plays by the rules. There are rules, then there are unwritten rules. If you're in the game and you're effective, you know the written rules. Out of bounds, double dribble, double fault, excessive celebration. You know what NOT to do. But just as important, is the way you play your game.

POWERPOINT SLIDE 6 Tell the story of Don Blackmon. So men, I want to ask you this. Are you on point? Have you let someone intimidate you into making something outside your family a higher priority in life? Is it your vocation or your hobby? Is it your friends enticing you to engage in pursuits that take you away from leading your family? Be courageous, be courageous, be courageous. Teach your children the way of Christ. Be bold with your faith. You cannot be intimidated and be a great father. They are incompatible. Every father here today give yourself a thumbs up or thumbs down. Have you been intimidated? Are you being everything you can be? Up or down.

POWERPOINT SLIDE 7 Finally, the hardworking farmer deserves the first share of the crops. It's the simple principle of sowing and reaping, is it not? Whatever a man sows, this he shall also reap. You sow anger, you'll reap discord. You sow golf, you'll reap bogies. You sow time away from home, you'll reap a family that has grown up apart from you. You sow hypocrisy, your children will resist your teaching like a 2 year old resists spinach. The farmer is patient and present for his crops. He knows them.

Soldier, athlete, farmer. Alert, on point, patient and present.

Now don't miss the progression here from soldier to athlete to farmer. If you're in Jesus Christ, be like a soldier, you're alert, be like a great athlete, you cannot be intimidated, you're unable to be swayed, like a farmer you will reap the harvest of a great family. You'll be in the first chair and your family will be there with you.

POWERPOINT SLIDE 8 So. Where are you today, men? Where are your families today? Are you in Chair 1, Chair 2, or Chair 3? If you're in Chair 2, your children most likely will be in Chair 3. Is that what you want? Of course not. If that's where you are then make the changes necessary in your life.

Fathers...Happy Father's Day. Enjoy your families. It's a tough message. But we're men, we need to hear and process tough messages. I want you to listen to me and stand up when it's your time. For some of you here, you need to thank God that you've kept your focus, that you've been alert to your family, not easily intimidated in your faith, and patient in your life. If that's you stand up today. For some of you, you need to re-focus yourself. You need to turn your gaze back to Christ and then squarely on those that depend on you. Your alertness needs to be honed, your gaze must become straight. If that's you, stand up today. And for some of you today, you need to start the process of being a great father by trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior for the first time. We're men, are we not? If you want to be a great father, it begins by proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Now for all those standing, I want wives and children to stand in support. Stand up with these men. Pray for their strength, honor them for their commitment today.

Prayer.

