# What Good is it Being a Father?

When Abraham Became a Father…

Genesis 11-50

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1. **Introduction (Exodus 20:12)**
   1. **What Good is it Being a Father?**
   2. **It’s much more than what we normally think…**
      1. All the changing nappies, and long nights rocking children to sleep after Mom has collapsed
      2. More than all the arguments and battles over what they are allowed to wear, and not allowed to wear, and what music they can and cannot listen to, and over their “friends” they are hanging around with
      3. No. In spite of all the negatives…
   3. **There are some things that make being a DAD, the greatest thing in the world!**
   4. **Not to take away from the value of a Mom…**
   5. **But being a Dad is actually JUST as important as being a Mom!**
      1. And if we continue to demean and mock fatherhood and manhood and dads, there will one day be no hope left for the future of families anywhere, much less the souls of men and women, because no one will know what they are missing out on, because they will not ever see real dads or moms – only Hollywood frauds!
      2. I know there is a danger in preaching about being a father, when some cannot be fathers, and some aren’t even married and so desperately want to be.
      3. But fatherhood is something awesome. Something honourable. Something so needed especially in the 21st century!
   6. **I am not finding perfect fatherhood in my Bible…**
   7. **But I do find real, true-blue, honest to goodness, manly, committed, faithful, passionate, sacrificial fatherhood in this Book – that ANYONE can be, by the same grace of God that saves sinners and makes them whole! Proven by Abraham**
      1. Many a man has attempted to leave his mark on this world
         1. Climbing the highest mountains, planting a flag and a plaque with their name on it
         2. Crossing south and north poles
         3. Placing footprints on the surface of the moon
         4. Building huge monuments to themselves
      2. But a man, named Abraham, left a legacy that has outlasted all others
         1. He left us the legacy of a godly father
         2. Of faith in a promise-keeping God
         3. Of a good name – Abraham!
         4. Of a good God, who uses us men in spite of our failures
         5. Of a good future, when Abraham’s descendants (starting with Abraham, and Isaac, and then Jacob… then Joseph) will be the cause of such blessing in this world, that you and I will never fathom it until we reach heaven!
      3. Being a Dad means… leaving a legacy of being a father to your sons, so that they YEARN to be one too!
      4. Let’s learn how to have that kind of a legacy from this day forward!
2. **Background (Genesis 17:1-4)**
   1. **In Genesis 12, we find a man named *Abram***
      1. A 75 year old *young* man that actually loved God
      2. It’s RARE to find men who did this way back then – the culture was against God, pagan, selfish and rebellious
      3. And such love for God is rare still today
   2. **Married to a good woman named *Sarai* (Gen 11:29,30)**
      1. The Bible doesn’t tell how long they had been married so far
      2. But at this point they had no children
   3. **Abram believed God when it was impossible to do so (Gen 15:5,6)**
      1. When the Bible says “he believed God”, it means it
      2. Abram had a real, passionate, confidence in God’s faithfulness
      3. He trusted God to be right, and always do right, and always keep His promises!
   4. **So, God honoured Abram’s passionate, confidence in Him as God Almighty**
      1. With some incredible promises (Gen 12:1-3)
         1. All the LAND of modern day Israel, and then some
         2. Great honour and wealth
         3. Great protection from his enemies
      2. But most of all, God promised Abram a son. Listen as God says the sweetest, most amazing words to Abram… “*thou shalt be a father*…” (Genesis 17:4)
   5. **Fatherhood for Abram was An Impossible Thing to Believe**
      1. Usually, it’s very easy to make a child
         1. Usually referred to as “unwanted” pregnancies
      2. But having children is not always possible – some people just can’t have children
      3. And Abram and Sarai were part of the few who couldn’t
      4. So both Abram and Sarai couldn’t just “believe it” when God promised… “*thou shalt be a father*…”
         1. Abraham laughed (17:17)
         2. Sarah laughed (18:12-15) – she was sooo embarrassed of being caught mocking!
      5. But there it was. A promise, that Abram decided to just go ahead and try and simply believe, simply because of WHO had promised it!!!
   6. **And so it came to pass, Abraham became a Dad - just as God promised (21:1-3)!**
3. **Message - What Good is it Being a Father?**
   1. **It’s A Lot of Fun being a Dad (21:6; 17:15-19)**
      1. Oh how the laughter ‘AT’ the promises of God changed
         1. Every time Abraham and Sarah called for Isaac, they were instantly reminded to LAUGH and rejoice and smile!
         2. That’s what Isaac’s name means! Laughter
      2. Can you imagine the laughter in that home?
         1. First as 89 year old Sarah started battling morning sickness, and waddling when she walked pregnant, and even wanting pickles in her ice cream?
         2. I so remember and miss that joy
         3. Just remember, I have some grandkids that I get to re-live those laughing times
      3. Imagine the joy of holding that baby boy in their arms
         1. The tickle times
         2. The cuddles
         3. The funny faces
         4. The coaching to walk their first steps
         5. The hide-and-seek games
         6. The rolling in the grass
         7. The first knock-knock jokes
         8. The first Dad jokes – the kid doesn’t know how bad the jokes are!
            1. Two peanuts were walking down the street. Unfortunately, one was a salted.
            2. Did you hear the news? FedEx and UPS are merging. They’re going to go by the name Fed-Up from now on.
            3. MOM: "How do I look?" DAD: "With your eyes."
            4. What did the horse say after it tripped? "Help! I’ve fallen and I can’t giddyup!”
            5. You know, a six year old LOVES those jokes!
            6. Too bad none of you do!
         9. The constant hugging and kissing Mom in the kitchen to the embarrassment of Jr
         10. The creating of forts in the family room, made of chairs and blankets and pillows
         11. The following the leader on adventures in the park
         12. The searching for dragons, and dinosaurs and lions, and tigers, and bears, oh my!
      4. Being a DAD is awesome fun!
   2. **It’s A Lot of Good Responsibility (18:19) – this is a huge point!**
      1. From the moment that God told him he was going to be a father, Abram had a New Purpose - To take responsibility of his home
         1. He already was a wealthy owner and operator of a huge cattle farm
         2. He had 318 full-time employees working for him
         3. He already was a husband to a great woman
         4. But now his entire purpose has changed
         5. He is a DAD
         6. Instead of a man striving to be a professional athlete, when he finds out he is going to be a Dad, he aims for company management. Instead of pursuing a singing or acting career, he buys health insurance. Instead of wanting to be a famous astronaut, he dreams of raising one. This is what growing up looks like. This is a man dying to self and living for another.
      2. Responsibility is a good thing! It’s a grown-up thing!
         1. No one else is responsible for that family of yours – YOU are gentlemen!
         2. Being a Dad means... assuming the care of a tiny, vulnerable and almost constantly needy person - it is the ultimate responsibility for a man and his wife… and then some!
         3. So gentlemen, the moment we all found out that we were going to be a father, WE mattered most! What we do, how we do it, how faithfully we do things… it all matters now!
      3. So, Take Charge (18:19)
         1. Ladies, be careful who you marry – you are saying to the world, this is the head of our home and I trust him and I am determined to work with him to succeed by God’s grace!
         2. The kids know the difference between Mom and Dad – he can enter a room and by the look on his face, by the snap of his finger, can take complete control
         3. AMEN!
         4. I’m not talking about abuse, or fierce wrath, but stern, firmness that mom’s don’t normally have – and shouldn’t want!
         5. Abraham had the ability to command his children and they obeyed
         6. Mom – don’t fight that – use it for your kids’ sake!
         7. Balance it out yes, but let dad be boss – be the head of the home! More next week!
      4. Be the main Provider (1Tim 5:8)
         1. Yes ladies, you can probably make just as much money if not more than your husband doing all the things men do – no question
         2. But is that what you really want? Is that how God designed things?
         3. Whatever a man thinks his life purpose is, this much is clear – he is called by God to provide for his family.
         4. One of the most God-glorifying pictures of the gospel is when a man puts his childhood dreams to the side, steps up to the plate, gets a job, and valiantly cares for his family. This man should be honoured and his work should be appreciated.
         5. Too many men seek their favourite dream job instead of a family
         6. And so you have countless millions of unmarried, uncommitted 20-something’s who are constantly unhappy with their jobs and lives and life-plans!
         7. This generation needs to get a job and pay your bills and provide for your home
      5. Protect your family at all costs
         1. Ladies, do NOT sit here and tell me how well YOU can raise your children just fine without your husband!!!
         2. You may HAVE to do it alone…
         3. But God designed the TWO of you to make that baby AND to protect that child until they can stand themselves
         4. Gentlemen, if you are a husband, you have a responsibility to protect your wife AND your children from bullies and
         5. Abraham did just that and more – went after the marauders who had stolen his nephew Lot
         6. He was the saviour of the body – the hero of the home (Eph 5:23)
         7. Every time you meet a Christian father, may the world once again see strength, and sense protection – instead of
      6. Carry ALL the burdens
         1. You wouldn’t respect fatherhood if it didn’t take so much work
         2. Our fatherhood, our work as fathers, must be worked on, and made part of our everyday schedule (Dt 6:6-12) – it is more important than working out in the Gym
            1. To teach our children to love God
            2. To know the God who made them – to learn everything they can about Him
            3. To obey God, and do things the right way – God’s way
            4. To never grow out of God – to never forget the Lord who gave them life and breath – and salvation!
         3. It takes work training our children to do right, and to love right, and to live right, and to speak right, and to pray right
         4. And it WILL be tested (Luke 15:20-24)
            1. Wayward sons and daughters
            2. Long, empty nights waiting, watching to see if they will come home
            3. All that we invest in our children will be put to the test
         5. But oh how rewarding it is to see the Biblical training work
            1. As our young men stay clear of drink and cigarettes and hash and heroine
            2. As they develop into strong men of character, and honesty, and hard work, and clean consciences, and a life lived in service to others
            3. As our young ladies wait for their marriage day before they throw themselves into the arms of a lover
         6. Being a Dad means… investing in an unseen future for our children, that we may never see fulfilled, but knowing it will be worth it all!
      7. These are all the reasons why your children will so look up to you, Dad
         1. YOU already have such influence in your home
         2. As an example of everything good, and strong and faithful and right
         3. You influence your home as the leader, the commander, the head
         4. And your children look up to you what a man is, how he acts and reacts, how he loves, how he works, and how he worships God
      8. Don’t keep allowing the State take over all those responsibilities! God gave them to you dads!
      9. And by-the-way, Being a Dad means… being comfortable with the word hero – because dads do it all while no one is looking, and with very little thought of reward
   3. **A Lot of Failures and Let-Downs – And I mean a LOAD of them!**
      1. Abraham FAILED a lot more than we like to admit
         1. As much as Abraham was a great man of faith and trust in God – known as a great Friend of God…
         2. Abraham was also a great FAILURE of a man, and even as a Dad
            1. Don’t look so surprised!
            2. THIS is why I love the Bible – because it is real
         3. Abraham FAILED to believe God always
            1. Yes, he was a man of faith, but…
            2. He doubted God at times, running down to Egypt to escape famine, even though God had promised to take good care of him in Canaan land
            3. Tried to stay with his backslidden nephew Lot after God told him to leave him
            4. Laughed at God for still promising him a son after 25 years of nothing (18:9-15)
            5. Abraham failed at believing
         4. He failed to protect his wife when HE was afraid (12:13; 20:1,2)
            1. He worried more about his own skin than the safety of his wife!
            2. He actually told his wife Sarah to lie to protect HIS own skin and life!
            3. Not once, but on two separate occasions he put his wife’s life at risk over his!
         5. He allowed another woman named Hagar into his bed!
         6. He had to walk away from a son named Ishmael because of his own sins not trusting God and not doing things God’s way!
         7. Father Abraham was a failure in so many ways
      2. Do not tell me YOU are the worst failure in human history gentlemen
      3. And ladies, do NOT think your man is the worst
      4. ALL MEN ARE FAILURES!
         1. That’s why we ALL need to get born again, and we usually all need to get married! And we need to spend as much time reading through this Bible as we spend reading or watching anything else in a day!
         2. If it weren’t for our humanity constantly getting in the way, being a Dad would have no sorrow in it!
         3. But it is in the failures that we can always choose to get right, and we begin to need God!
         4. Which leads to the next truth!
      5. But having a child, proves that God delights in giving us another chance!
   4. **It’s GREAT being a Dad, Because It Creates A Great Need for God (Gen 22:1-9)**
      1. Having children will drive you to your knees gentlemen like almost nothing else
         1. Learning how to give your children over to God, and trust them into God’s hands, and let God work out what seems so impossible for us to handle!
         2. Gentlemen, when you become a father, you honestly won’t have a clue. Everything will always seem like it is Sink or Swim time / Do or Die time.
         3. You will get SOME confidence and stability with managing one child…, and then another comes along, and they are completely different!
      2. Most men are oblivious about what to do!
         1. We get married thinking they don’t need to know anything before the “I do” – only to find that women don’t even speak the same language! We are not even sure they come from the same planet!
         2. And honestly, we think raising children is a breeze
            1. Just tell them to do their homework, and to do their chores and eat their veg
            2. And they will all turn out just fine!
         3. But, then the battles begin
            1. And the emotions flair
            2. And the shocks of what they get into, come at us like waves
            3. And the sorrows and griefs pile up
            4. And the reaping, oh the reaping begins!
         4. And you find yourself up all night worrying, and panicking, and, fretting, and…
         5. PRAYING, and begging God for new wisdom, for help, for strength, for patience!
      3. Being a DAD **demands dependence** upon the God who knows how to hold things together, and make everything turn out for good!
         1. It’s proven, that many a man learned how important GOD becomes, when they had a sick child
         2. Or when their teenage son or daughter does not come home on time
      4. Abraham was the same kind of Dad as you and I are
         1. Ignorant, dense, arrogant, slow to figure things out
         2. And constantly being driven to his knees in absolute dependence upon the God who loved Him anyways, and would always help him if he just asked!
      5. And THAT is a great thing
         1. Being a Christian Dad makes being a Dad even better! Why?
         2. Because WE would be SUPER-Failures without God’s constant help!
         3. And there is so much peace and strength found in a man’s walk with God
         4. You won’t find it anywhere else gentlemen
   5. **It Will Be Worth It All (Proverbs 17:9)**
      1. There is great honour in being a Dad! Pro 17:6 *Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers*.
         1. Just being a Dad makes kids proud!
         2. The Honour and Glory and Pride of being a Dad is NOT WRONG
         3. There are so many hurting people, that came from broken homes (like the one “I” grew up in), and others who have no home or family
         4. Just because the devil has wreaked havoc in just about every home represented here this morning, does NOT mean we should throw away the glory and honour of fatherhood – with all its flaws and blemishes!
         5. Hollywood honours everything except being a Dad – have you noticed that?
      2. But GOD honours fatherhood – how?
         1. By being like a FATHER to us – more than GOD, or Creator, but FATHER
            1. That is God’s favourite title – Father – Abba – Daddy! Gal 4:6 “*And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father*.” DADDY
            2. By the way, that’s who JESUS is – “*the everlasting FATHER*” (Isa 9:6)
         2. By making a way to be close to Him. We can approach Him like a child does his loving father – crawl right up into His lap and pour out our hearts, and expect Him to stop what He is doing and help us!
         3. God loves being a Father
            1. Psa 103:13 *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him*.
            2. Pro 3:12 *For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth*.
      3. He WILL honour your fatherhood – as flawed as it will always be
      4. But you have to let Him be YOURS first? It requires you to be born all over again – on the inside, Jesus said in John 3
4. **Some Help on Enjoying Fatherhood**
   1. **Turn off the TV, and live in this book for a while!**
   2. **Repent of believing fatherhood died long ago**
   3. **Decide to follow in Abraham’s steps, and enjoy being a Dad again**
      1. **By Keeping it Fun being a Dad – be fun, not a grouch!**
         1. Make good memories
         2. Do weird things – be unpredictable sometimes
         3. Love your wife in front of your kids
         4. Hug, hold, thank God loudly for your children!
         5. Make worship with them fun
      2. **Be the man of your home - Bear the Responsibilities**
         1. Grow up and be the man (1Kings 2:1,2). Stop expecting your wife to be strong when God called YOU to be strong
         2. So, BE the example of what a Dad is supposed to be
            1. Go to bed on time, and Wake up earlier so that you can spend time with God yourself
            2. Carry the load men!
            3. Make the hard decisions
            4. Be the main Provider
            5. Protect your family at all costs
         3. You actually will find that you thoroughly enjoy doing all that – because your Dad!
      3. **Allow for Failures – be real**
         1. Allow for failures in your children, AND in yourself
         2. Don’t excuse YOUR FAILURES, but don’t DIE by them either
         3. There is a right balance when we accept failures as our call to depend upon God more than we do ourselves!
         4. Ladies, if you want your MAN to be a better husband, allow him to be a failure trying
      4. **Depend more and more on God** – be spiritually minded, and not just carnal, and lazy, and selfish, and self-centred!
         1. Quit trying to do everything on your own!
         2. Spend loads of time with Jesus, crying out for help and strength
         3. There is NO shame in being a disciple of Jesus
      5. **Put up with every trial and testing – be faithful - just go on through them all**
         1. I didn’t even talk about the time of testing that Abraham had to go through with his one and only begotten son Isaac
         2. ALL of your tough times came from the perfect hand of God
         3. So accept them as a gift as precious as your children
      6. **Look forward to the glory of children’s children – be ready for great rewards!**
         1. Start believing that it will be worth every sacrifice, and every heartache, and every sleepless night and every desperate prayer
         2. Psa 58:11 *So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily [God] is a God that judgeth in the earth*.
         3. Pro 17:6 *Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers*.
         4. That’s how faith works!
5. **Invitation**
   1. If you need a good example of a real father, learn from Abraham – 14 chapters dedicated to showing his life and faith and failures
   2. If you need a perfect Father yourself, look to Jesus – He has made a way for anybody to get born again into the very family of God
      1. Admitting defeat – repentance
      2. And accepting all the efforts of Jesus as enough for you to be forgiven and start over