

If I Could Build a Dad
1 Thes 2:7-12

Intro: Some men in a pickup truck drove into a lumberyard. One of the men walked in the office and said, 'We need some four-by-twos.' The clerk said, 'You mean two-by-fours, don't you?'

The man said, 'I'll go check,' and went back to the truck. He returned in a minute and said, 'Yeah, I meant two-by-fours.'

'All right. How long do you need them?'

The customer paused for a minute and said, 'I'd better go check.' After awhile, the customer returned to the office and said, 'A long time. We're gonna build a house.'

WOULDN'T YOU HATE TO SEE THAT HOUSE THEY BUILT?

All people are builders in some form or another. And probably the greatest building we do is in regard to people. We're all building people, because we all influence people and hopefully, for God and for good in life.

Today we begin a series I am calling ***Blueprints for A Christian Home***. Hebrews 3:4 says, "***For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God***" and it is my hearts desire that through this series we can all learn some things we can use to build our home according to God's blueprint.

We begin this series by looking at ***God's blueprint for A Dad***. Paul considered him self a "*Spiritual father*" to the believers of Thessalonica just as he did the Christians in Corinth, "***I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I***

warn you" so when he writes to the Saints in 1 Thess 2:7-12 he is writing to them from that mind set. Paul is laying out God's ***Blueprint for A Dad*** when he speaks of how he lived his life in front of those new Christians there in Thessalonica.

[Read 1 Thess. 2:7-12/Pray/Dismiss Jr. Church]

Erma Bombeck tells the story called, *I Remember Papa*, it goes like this:

When I was a kid, a father was like the light in a refrigerator. Every house had one, but nobody knew what either of them did once the door was shut.

My dad left the house every morning and always seemed glad to see everyone at night.

He opened the jar of pickles when nobody else could.

He was the only one in the house who wasn't afraid to go to the basement by himself.

He cut himself shaving, but no one kissed it or got excited about it. It was understood whenever it rained, he got the car and brought it around to the door.

When anyone was sick, he got the prescription filled.

He set mousetraps, cut back the roses to the thorns, wouldn't clip you when you came to the front door.

When I got a bike, he ran alongside me for at least a thousand miles until I got the hang of it.

I was afraid of everyone else's father, but not my own.

Once I made him tea. It was only sugar water, but he sat on a small chair and said it was delicious.

Whenever I played house, the mother doll had a lot to do. I never knew what to do with the daddy doll, so I had him say, "I'm going off to work now," and threw him under the bed.

When I was nine years old, my father didn't get up one morning and go to work.

*He went to the hospital and died the next day.
I went to my room and felt under my bed for the daddy doll. When
I found him, I dusted him off and put him on my bed.
He never did anything - I didn't know his leaving would hurt so
much. I still don't know why.*

In our culture today Men and dads in particular are not always shown in the best of light. In movies and TV shows they are often shown as mean, uncaring, the one who runs out on a family leaving the wife to fend for her self. They are almost always shown as the one who kills his wife and or family or totally consumed by the pursuit of success and money to the point of neglecting his family. Sometimes he is painted as the bumbling buffoon who couldn't find is way without the help of his wife.

Men, Dads I want to say that I don't believe this portrayal is fair but it may be somewhat deserved. In our modern culture we have drifted so far from what God intended dads to be that we helped perpetuate the caricature of this kind of dad.

But what if we could build a **Godly Dad**? What would he look like?

Well, ***If I Could Build a Dad he would be someone Who...***

1. ***Cherishes His Family Greatly*** V. 7
 - a. Remember here that Paul looked at those he won as his sons and daughters so he is illustrating how much he cherished them by using the illustration of a nursing mother.
 - i. To cherish = to hold in high regard, to esteem highly, to place a great value on
 - ii. Paul compares the care he gave the Thessalonians to the care given a nursing infant by his mother.

- iii. It is the care that places the welfare of the child above that of the mother.
- iv. A mother would rather face harm than to have her child harm.
- v. "The figure implies a special effort to protect and to provide for every need, even to the extent of great sacrifice"
- b. ***If I could Build a Dad*** he is one who would Cherish His Family just as a nursing mother
 - i. A nursing mother cannot turn that responsibility over to someone else
 - ii. In Paul's day you couldn't be a nursing mother and turn your baby over to someone else—the baby had to be in your arms, next to your heart
 - iii. A the nursing mother's food intake turns into milk for the baby's nourishment
 - iv. Dad's feed on the Word of God and then shares its nourishment with his kids
 - v. Just like the nursing mother, dad's who are feeding their kids should be careful of what they are taking in.
- c. A dad who ***Cherishes His Family Greatly***
 - i. Sacrifices for them
 - ii. Is patience
 - iii. Provides nourishment for them; both physical and spiritual
 - iv. And protects them—would give his very life to protect them
- d. **ILL:** I may have told this story before but it is fitting here. During our first tour in Germany my neighbor tried to shot me but missed and the round went through the front door of our apartment. When I was finally able to climb back in the house through a back window all I could think of is getting my hands on him and doing whatever I had to do

to keep him from hurting any of my family. If there is one thing that will make a Christian dad's blood boil is to threaten his family.

If I Could Build a Dad he would be someone who Cherishes His Family Greatly, secondly He would be someone Who...

2. ***Loves His Family Deeply*** V. 8a

- a. The term "affectionately desirous" It is a term that is used in the nursery but is masculine and tender.
- b. It conveys or describes:
 - i. A yearning for
 - ii. A fond desire for
 - iii. To fill a need for
 - iv. A heart's appetite for
 - v. In other words, our heart's appetite is to be for our family
- c. **III:** I spent two separate tours in Germany and both times I had to deploy before Sally and the kids could come over. The first time I was lower in rank and roomed with 3 other guys so my "homesickness" was kept hidden pretty good. The second time I was higher in rank and had a private room while I waited for them to get there. In both cases however, when I got letters from home it was almost impossible to hide my feelings. You see, my desire for my family was so deep that I was actually sick and hurt for them. At times it was as if food could not satisfy my hunger for them.

If I Could Build a Dad he would be someone who Cherished His Family Greatly, Loves His Family Deeply, thirdly, He would be someone Who...

3. ***Invests In His Family Personally*** V. 8b

- a. Paul says that he was "...willing to have imparted unto you..."
- b. To impart something means:

- i. To show
 - ii. To share
 - iii. To give part
 - iv. To invest
- c. The picture is that of an old master spending years teaching, training, and preparing his apprentice in all the craft and skills he knows so that the apprentice can take his place.
- d. He invests who he is into the apprentice.
 - i. In essence he was talking about being a mentor
 - ii. A mentor:
 1. A teacher
 2. An Adviser
 3. A counselor
 4. A guide
 5. A tutor
- e. Paul mentions two areas that he invested in the believers:
 - i. The Gospel of God—
 1. Dads, we are to be the leaders in the home and instruct our families in the saving knowledge of the Gospel.
 2. We are not to leave it up the preacher or the Sunday School teacher.
 3. It is not the mother's responsibility either.
 4. **III:** In Simi Valley, California, June 11, 2004, at the casket side of former president Ronald Reagan, Michael Reagan recounted that on a flight from Washington to California in 1988, his father told him that "about his love of God [and] his love of Christ as his Savior." He went on to say...

"I did not know then what it all meant, but I certainly, certainly know now. I can't think of a

- better gift for a father to give a son, and I hope to honor my father by giving my son Cameron and my daughter Ashley that very same gift he gave to me"* (Baptist Press, June 15, 2004), making reference to the Gospel of Christ.
5. Dads are you sharing the Gospel of Christ at every open door your family gives?
 - ii. Paul also says he invested **"also our own souls"**
 1. *Souls* here means his very life.
 2. Paul is taking a part of himself and giving it to the church in Thessalonica.
 3. For us to build a legacy, we are to invest who we are and what we know into the lives of our families.
 4. We are to be open and honest with our families.
 5. We share our:
 - a. Hurts
 - b. Frustration
 - c. Failure
 - d. Stress
 - e. Successes
 - f. Joys
 - g. Lessons of life
 6. **ILL:** What man in his right mind would walk away from a \$600,000-a-year career for the sake of his family? All-star major league baseball pitcher Tim Burke did. And, he gave it up while he was at the top of his game and getting better.

Why? Because his wife and their four adopted children needed him. Tim decided that being available to his family was more important than the glory, glamour, and big money of major league

baseball. (From Making Your Work Count for God: How to find meaning and joy in your work by Ken Abraham. Copyright 1994 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Published by Thomas Nelson, Inc.)

If I Could Build a Dad he would be someone who Cherished His Family Greatly, Loved His Family Deeply, Invests In His Family Personally, fourthly, He would be someone Who...

4. ***Labors for His Family Diligently*** V. 9
 - a. The father works to support his family.
 - i. Even though the Christians in Philippi sent financial help Paul still made tents and paid his own way.
 - ii. No one could accuse him of using his ministry for his own profit.
 - iii. Paul used this fact to shame the lazy Christians in the Thessalonian church.
 - b. Paul used the words **"labor and travail."**
 - i. J.B. Phillips translated these words **"our struggles and hard work."**
 - ii. **"Toil and hardship"** would be another good translation.
 - iii. It was not easy to make tents and minister the Word at the same time.
 - c. Many of you are doing this or have done this.
 - i. You have worked many years and late hours to see to it that your family had what it needed and some of its wants.
 - ii. **ILL:** I can remember growing up one of my most vivid memories of dad was how he would get up early in the morning—sometimes 6 even 7 days a week—and leave for work. He would return home sometimes well after dark.

If ever a man *labored and travailed night and day* for his family it was my dad. He was determined that he would not be a burden on us or on any one else.

- iii. Paul says that he toiled and labored night and day to keep from being a burden to his children (the believers.)

If I Could Build a Dad he would be someone who Cherished His Family Greatly, Loved His Family Deeply, Invested In His Family Personally, Labors for His Family Diligently, faithfully, He would be someone Who...

5. ***Lives Before His Family Godly*** V. 10

- a. Paul lived an exemplary life to show them how to live godly.
 - i. Holy and pure before Gof
 - ii. Justly = upright and honest in his relationships with people
 - iii. Unblameably=in his business dealings with others
- b. They lived what they preached.
 - i. They walked the talk.
 - ii. They did not live by the ancient proverbial saying:
 - iii. "Do not do as I do, but do as I say."
 - iv. Their ***Life matched their Lip***
- c. Our families know who we are really.
 - i. We can fool our church friends
 - ii. We can fool our boss
 - iii. We can fool those around us
 - iv. But other than God no one knows us better than our families.
 1. They know the words that come of our mouth when we think no one is watching.
 2. They know how we behave when we are in the privacy of our own home
- d. **ILL:** When we were stationed in Great Lakes Ill Sally and I would teach Jr. Church every couple of months. I remember this one time when I was teaching and the question was asked by one of the kids about drinking. His

dad was a sailor and came to church with his mom but dad would set home and drink on Sundays.

Well I was trying to be as sensitive as possible when giving my answer when out of no where the chaplain's son belts out, "***Sometimes my dad drinks a beer***" that kind of but a cap on any thing I would teach. The lesson was over. After church I caught the chaplain and told him what happened. He said, "*I guess I better be a little more careful about what I do in front of him.*"

- e. The truth was his life should back up his lip.

If I Could Build a Dad he would be someone who Cherishes His Family Greatly, Loves His Family Deeply, Invests In His Family Personally, Labors for His Family Diligently, Lives Before His Family Godly, finally, He would be someone Who...

6. ***Instructs His Family To Grow Spiritually*** Vv. 11-12

- a. A father must not only support the family by working, and live before his family as a good example; he must also take time to speak to the family members to instruct them
 - i. Paul knew the importance of teaching new believers the truths that would help them grow in the Lord.
 - ii. In verse 11 Paul says that he dealt with each one ***personally "...as a father doth his children"***
 - iii. As busy as he was, Paul still had time for personal instruction and counseling with each of them
 - iv. Paul uses three terms in verse eleven to describe his instruction and influence toward the Thessalonians.
 1. He Exhorted,
 2. He Comforted
 3. He Charged the believers
 - v. What was it that he Exhorted, comforted and Charged them to do:

1. look at verse 12, It says that he did this, ***“That ye would walk worthy of God...”***
2. He is instructing and encouraging them to live a godly life.
3. He does so as a father does his own children.
- b. Paul’s purpose for this fatherly life was to insure that his ‘Children’ might develop and grow spiritually.
- c. The greatest accomplishment of my life...and likely the one that I can take little real credit for is to be able to say that all three of my children not only attend church but they are actively involved. They teach, serve and now our son is even heading up a missions trip to Argentina.
- d. Each child has to learn to walk physically and each child of has to learn to walk spiritually and the responsibility falls on the father to raise up their children in the ways of the Lord:
 - i. Solomon is speaking to men when he says, ***“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it”*** in Proverbs 22:6.
 - ii. There is a similar Danish proverb that goes like this, *“What youth learns, age does not forget.”*
 - iii. An old English saying goes like this, *“As the twig is bent, so grows the tree.”*
- e. It is important Dad’s to remember there is all the difference in the world between *Telling* a child and *Training* a child.
 - i. The old adage of *do as I say not as I do* doesn’t hold water in God economy.
 - ii. The Hebrew word translated *train* means *“to hedge in.”*
 - iii. The picture is of cattle being guided into a pen
 - iv. Their path is fenced in so there is only one way they can go.

- v. The work of training a child must begin when they are young.

Conclusion: If I Could Build a Dad he would be someone who Cherishes His Family Greatly, Loves His Family Deeply, Invests In His Family Personally, Labors for His Family Diligently, Lives Before His Family Godly, finally, He would be someone who Instructs His Family To Grow Spiritually