

Cornerstone's Sermon Conversation Guide

June 20, 2010/Fred Provencher

Love Like the Father

Colossians 3

In our church we recognize we are a diverse body. We celebrate this truth. But, this morning we want to indulge in speaking directly to men...and especially fathers. Our society is in deep need of fathers who love like our Heavenly Father. God in scripture, in Colossians 3, reminds us that fathers are not to embitter their children or they will become discouraged. To embitter means to stir up emotions in a negative way. It doesn't necessarily tell us how this happens...it just tells us that it can happen. Here are three possible things that can cause kids to become embittered.

1. Inconsistent Discipline

We need to discipline for disobedience rather than for childhood mistakes that cause us to be frustrated. Kids act like children, but discipline of kids can't be for kids acting like kids. Discipline needs to take place because of disobedience.

2. Hypocrisy

This is doing the very thing one tells others not to do. If fathers tell their children to listen to their mother, but they don't model good listening...kids will pick this up and become embittered that they are being held responsible to do something the father doesn't even practice.

3. Childlike Behavior

Men are often living for themselves, and they miss out on modeling responsibility to their children. Someone has to be the adult in any parent/child relationship and especially in the midst of any conflict. It should be the father. Children need to see fathers taking responsibility and being the adult.

In the end, influence authority is the only authority we really have. Do our children respect us? Will they continue to respect us? How do we earn this respect? It's never easy! There are no easy answers! In order to be a loving father, you need to be a loving person. In order to be a loving person, you must be at home in the love of Jesus Christ. The writer of Colossians reminds us in the overall context that our lives need to be in Christ. Our minds need to remain on Christ. Christ is love. He is grace. He is wisdom. Being a good father means being a good follower of Jesus Christ.

Influence authority is the only authority we really have in our children's lives at the end. How did Jesus earn influence authority in our lives? What does this tell us about our own calling as we lead our children?

In which of the 3 areas above have you found yourself struggling in recent times?

What are some other things that you've learned will help keep your children from becoming embittered?

What else has this teaching stirred up in you that you need to work out with others?

What area of life is God inviting you to move forward in so he can reveal himself to you in a deeper way? What else might God be speaking to you through this story? What do you think God might be trying to affirm in you about who you are as his child through this story? What step of action is God calling you to take this week?