

THE MESSAGE

Theme: GOD'S MESSAGE TO FATHERS

**♪Oh, blest the house, whate'er befall, Where Jesus Christ is all in all!
A home that is not wholly his—How sad and poor and dark it is!**

TREAT HER RIGHT

"If Mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy." That phrase rings so true that it sounds like it must be taken from the Bible...maybe Hezekiah 2, or was it the Epistle to the Mesopotamians?

Okay, maybe not. But, husbands, let's be honest. There is no misery like that of being handcuffed to a miserable woman. Do you agree? Women may be a little physically weaker than their husbands, but their emotions and state of mind are powerful enough to dominate the whole house.

The key is how the man in her life treats her. The apostle Paul wrote, "**In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself**" (Ephesians 5:28). Christian women love Jesus—he listens to their pain and sorrows, feels their pain and sorrows, and even *carries* their pain and sorrows. A woman who has a Christian man whom she can depend on, who loves her the way Jesus loves her, who will open his heart and let her share her frustrations, is a woman at peace.

Guys, when you serve her and meet her needs, your life will get a lot better. When Mama's happy, everybody's happy. And that will make for a very happy Father's Day.

**♪Oh, blest the house where faith you find
And all within have set their mind
To trust their God and serve him still And do in all his holy will.**

YOU ARE YOUR CHILDREN'S REFUGE

There's a reason children retell stories about bogeymen and monsters under their beds. It's because they know their world is scary and dangerous and they need to know that there is a place for them where they can be safe. Daddy's strength is a huge wall holding off the monsters to give them time to grow up.

Where does Daddy get his strength from? In the earlier part of his life, Solomon was still following the miraculous wisdom God gave him. He shares an important insight about family security: "**He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge**" (Proverbs 14:26). God's Word and wisdom help men to control their own sinful and violent impulses, and his divine forgiveness helps a man to be a patient, disciplined, and kind husband and father.

A little girl needs a daddy in her home who thinks she is a princess, beautiful and precious. If her heart is secure in that manly admiration, she doesn't have to throw herself at bad boys for attention when she is a teenager. A little boy needs a daddy in his home who shows him that real strength is in godly self-control, self-discipline, and self-sacrifice. The feeling of manhood is not automatic—it needs to be conferred by another man.

A Christian father who is strong in the Lord will know how to be strong for his family. And that will make for a very happy Father's Day.

**♪Oh, blest the parents who give heed Unto their children's foremost need
And weary not of care or cost. May none to them and heav'n be lost!**

APPRECIATE THE QUEEN

It is one of the characteristics of the human race that men tend to be task-oriented and women are wired more for relationships. Do you agree? Think about it—is there male or female handwriting on most of the greeting cards that you receive? Female, of course. What would you say is the female-to-male gender breakdown of gift giving in your circles? 50/50? I doubt it. Try 80/20, and I might believe you.

Everybody needs to grow in cultivating a thankful spirit, but I think men have farther to go. Tending and mending relationships is learned behavior for us. One of the most crushing burdens for a woman to bear, especially one who has sacrificed so much to bear and nurture young children, is to go unappreciated.

TV shows celebrate narcissistic males in an endless quest for a glamorous trophy babe. Husbands, has God blessed you with a woman who has been faithful to you, worked hard, built up your reputation, and poured herself into the lives of your children? Do you have any idea what a prize God gave you? **“A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones” (Proverbs 12:4).**

Wear your crown with pride. Have you told her today (hey—I mean *today*—last week doesn't count) how much you appreciate her? Flowers “just because” get you bonus points. And that can make for a very happy Father's Day.

**♪Blest such a house; it prospers well. In peace and joy the parents dwell,
And in their children's lives is shown How richly God can bless his own.**

BELIEVE THE BLESSING PROMISE

People have always craved shortcuts to get what they want. That's why Ponce de Leon searched for the fountain of youth; that's why Harry Potter and his friends studied magic; that's why Willie Sutton robbed banks; and that's why people gamble.

Does it surprise you that there are some simple paths you can choose that will significantly improve your home life? No, not chanting *Leviosa!* or *Alohomora!* The secret? Fearing the Lord. **“Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table. Thus is the man blessed who fears the LORD” (Psalm 128:1-4).**

Realize two things. First, *fear* in this sense does not mean to be terrified. It means to respect God, prize your relationship with him above all things, pay attention to his Word, be proud to be identified with him, and make your life decisions based on his will.

Second, God blesses those who fear (i.e., respect and obey) him. *Bless* means that the almighty God intervenes in your life and changes its course to make it better for you. He makes good things happen for you that wouldn't have occurred otherwise.

Guys, your wife and children will love living in a blessed home. So will you, and that will make for a very happy Father's Day. Amen.

**♪Then here will I and mine today A solemn promise make and say:
Though all the world forsake his Word, I and my house will serve the Lord!**

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

L: Lord God, heavenly Father, bless all the fathers in the world. Guide them to be good role models and loving to all their children. Help them to be a father like you are. Give them grace and patience to handle all situations in a loving way.

Dear Jesus, you know the love of your heavenly Father but also the love and care of your earthly step-father. For your sake, forgive us fathers when we fail in our duties and responsibilities, when we are not as loving, concerned, and patient as we should be, when we do not depend on you as we should. Help us to lead our wives and children to you and your saving grace.

Lord, please take care of our dads. Though they are brave and protective, they must also be frightened sometimes. When money runs low and when we need things, when their hearts break because they can't do it all, please help us to let them know how much we love them...and how much you love them.

We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior, who taught us to pray:

THE LORD'S PRAYER (modern)