

Lessons in Sowing Faithfulness

Lesson 1

Proverbs 4:1-6, 10-12, 20-22; Matthew 6:25-26;

Luke 15:11-32; Hebrews 12:4-11

July 17, 2022

Tenderness and Discipline: The Makings of a Godly Dad

INTRODUCTION

Our relationships with our dads (or lack thereof) shape who we are, even years later as adults. Each day that a dad interacts with his child, he's planting seeds, either for better or for worse. Pastor Chuck Swindoll said, "Each day of our lives, we make deposits in the memory banks of our children."

A father's love takes many forms. Sometimes it means showing patience and joyfulness with our kids, and other times it means training and setting expectations. A loving father knows that both tenderness and discipline are required to plant seeds of faith in his children...and sometimes it requires both at the same time.

Our Father in Heaven loves us deeply and joyfully. He challenges us to grow and disciplines us with consequences, but He also pursues us and desperately wants to cover us in His tender grace. He is the perfect example of what an earthly dad should be.

Memory verse: "Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father?"—Hebrews 12:7

Pray, and read the passages listed above. What questions or observations do you have about them?

OBSERVATION: What do the passages say?

1. What does the Lord do for those that He loves?
(Hebrews 12:4-11)

2. How did the father of the prodigal son respond when he saw his son return home? (Luke 15:20)

3. What does Proverbs 4 say that a father provides for his children? (Proverbs 4:1-6, 10-12, 20-22)

4. How did Jesus say that our Heavenly Father values us?
(Matthew 6:25-26)

INTERPRETATION: What do the passages mean?

1. What is the connection between God's discipline and our righteousness? What does this say about the connection between an earthly father's discipline and his child's growth? (Hebrews 12:4-11)

2. Write down three emotions that the father showed toward his prodigal son. What does this tell us about how God feels about us? (Luke 15:11-32)

3. Why is it so important for a child to pay attention to his father's instruction? (Proverbs 4:1-6, 10-12, 20-22)

4. What does God's concern for us say about His tenderness for us? (Matthew 6:25-26)

APPLICATION: How do the passages apply to your life?

1. Sometimes we equate "discipline" with punishment, but we also use the word to describe structure that leads to growth and maturity, such as in "self-discipline." How has your father's discipline affected you?

2. What are some ways that dads can be tender at the same time that they are instructing or disciplining their children? Why do you think that we often think of tenderness and discipline as mutually exclusive?

3. Think for a few minutes about your relationship with your father. What feelings do these thoughts bring? Encouragement? Anger? Abandonment? Whatever the case, pray for a few minutes, and write down three ways that your relationship (or lack thereof) with your dad shaped who you are. Then, pray that the Lord will bring a right spirit within you, whether it be thankfulness or forgiveness.