

# Lessons from Fatherhood

Sermon Title: **Lessons from Fatherhood**

Sermon Number: **8211**

Speaker: **James Bronner**

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**PASTOR JAMES:** Amen, amen. I want to thank my wife for being in the balcony. She is supposed to be on bedrest, but she pressed her way to be here to support me, and I thank her for that.

The pastor gave me the reason why he chose me to speak today, because I had the most children. It feels unusual to have the most children, but he had to be one of the youngest fathers and the youngest of the brothers. But we just have to be obedient to God and, I tell you, He can shoot them out as fast as He wants to. It really wasn't our rate of control on it, but it was God's mandate. My mother, with several of the kids, she said, "Boy, you need to slow this thing down. You're having these children too fast." And I said, "Mama, we've been trying. We've been using everything under the sun." And even though my earthly father is not here today, his mountainous spirit rests upon my mother.

Actually, for the first time that I've ever spoken, I got choked up this morning, and I'm not a very emotional man. I have an engineering background, and logic is my strong point. But today I got a little overwhelmed, and before I had to speak, I looked out and I said, "My mother is not here today. I just really miss her presence." And as I was sitting up here and had my head bowed, I looked up a little later, and I saw her sitting there. Something just overcame me, and even though it's not Mother's Day, something just took over my heart when I saw her today. Even when she doesn't say a word, just her presence, she's been all of our biggest supporter since we were born. She just lets us encourage her. I had on makeup for the TV, and I felt my eyes watering. I thought, "I don't want to this thing to ruin my makeup." I just found myself just having to wipe the tears before they ran down my face, and it's just was a lot on me. You know, the thought just came to me, my wife may be with me all of my days; but my mother won't always be with me. So you have got to appreciate the days that you have. We don't stop and appreciate it until they're gone. So today, I just appreciate having my mother here just to support me. I just want to go hug her and just say "I love you" this morning. Mother, I love you.

**MRS. ROBBIE BRONNER:** I had to press on for you. I wasn't coming; but I said, "I've got to go and support James." I wasn't able; but I said, "I've got to go and support him." And God got me here after I said, "God only You can get me here; only You, only You. Amen."

**PASTOR JAMES:** All right. Amen, amen. That's the heart of a mother. She said that her body said that she wasn't able to come today. She was tired from working on a book about the family and about how they made it through it. She had been working long hours through the night; but she thought about her son bringing the Word, and she said she pressed on and said, "I've got to go and support James."

Some of you need to call your mothers and your fathers today when you leave and just tell them how much you love them. A lot of you won't speak to them for a year. That overwhelmed me. Even though I had been over to my mother's house twice this week -- it wasn't that I hadn't seen her in a long time. But we'll go long periods of time and won't even call mommy and daddy. Then, you know, a funeral, we'll just bawl all the whole service; and yet while they were living and wanted to spend time in fellowship with us, we're too busy.

That's how our Heavenly Father feels a lot of times. We wait until we're in need and something drastic has happened before we even talk to our Heavenly Father.

Well, let's bow, because all of this is not part of my message; so I've got to move on this morning. Let us bow for a word of prayer.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for this day, oh, Lord, Father's Day. Lord and above all fathers, we honor You, oh, Lord, as the Supreme Father, Lord. We thank You, Lord, for first of all allowing us to call You Father, oh, Lord. You could've just left it with "the Almighty God" or you could've left it with "Master and Teacher and Protector"; but You allowed us to be more intimate with You, oh, Lord. Night light, no boss on our jobs, unlike any ruler, oh, Lord, You deserve so much respect; but yet You let us call you Father and Daddy, because You love us, oh, Lord, and we are Your own, oh, Father. So we thank You, Lord, for just giving us that relationship with You, oh, Lord. And even when we have no earthly father, oh, Lord, You're still there holding our hands, oh, Lord. You're still there giving us wisdom and guidance, oh, Lord; disciplining us when we do wrong, oh, Lord; consoling us, oh, Lord when we're hurting, oh, Father. We thank You, oh, Lord, for You've given us a greater inheritance than any earthly father could do, oh, Lord. You've given us joy unspeakable, oh, Lord. You've given us mansions, oh, Father, with you, oh, Lord. You've given us peace, oh, Father. You've given us supernatural power, oh, Lord, authority over devils and demons, oh, Lord. What an inheritance You've left, oh, Lord. You allowed us to be called by Your Name, oh, Father. And, Lord, we pray that we don't dare dishonor that Name. We pray, oh, Lord, that You'll let us live so that You'll be proud of us, oh, Father, and say, "I'm proud that that's my son and that's my daughter and that I'm their Daddy." We thank You, Lord, and we honor You this day; in the name of Jesus, we pray, amen.

Welcome to Brothers of the Word, because, Brother, you need the Word. Today is Father's Day, and it may not be Father's Day when you're watching this on television or listening over the internet or listening via CD; but it's Father's Day here at the Arch of Salvation today. This is a message for fathers and all heads of households, even if you're a single mother. If you're not a father, then it's for somebody else that you know that is a father or a guardian, and I pray that you pass this message along to them.

If you'll turn today to 1 Corinthians, Chapter 4. It's on the back of your program, starting at Verse 14, the Word of the Lord reads, "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me."

Ye have not many fathers. And when Paul penned that thousands of years ago, I believe he was talking about spiritual fathers; but as the Prophets of old spoke, many times the words that they spoke were true in many different forms. Thousands of years later, not only do we have not many good spiritual fathers; but physical and natural fathers are lacking in the land, and it's still even more true today than it was in the day when he wrote this that ye have not many fathers.

A few weeks ago, I took the family out to the park up the street from our house, and I took my three oldest boys out into the field and began to play ball with them while my wife played with the girls. After a minute of playing ball, I just stopped and looked around this park. It was in a very affluent area of town. It was a beautiful day outside, about 85 degrees, not a cloud in the sky. It was a Saturday, perfect day to be out at the park, a large, very nice park.

I looked around, and I said, "It's weird; but as beautiful as this day is, I'm the only father that I see in this entire park playing with their children." I looked all around, and I saw nothing but mothers and nannies and babysitters. I didn't see one other father out at the park playing with their children, and this verse came back in my spirit that, "Ye have not many fathers today." I wondered where were all of the daddies that were supposed to be out there.

I kept playing with my children. There were other children in the park, and one by one they noticed me playing with my children, and they began to come over and would ask me, "Sir, would it be all right if we played along with you?" and I said, "Sure!" We were playing kickball, and I would put them in the game and give them a position. And before I knew it, I looked around, and there were about 20 children playing with us, and I played balled with them. We played dodgeball and kickball and soccer, and we had so much fun. Then I stopped and realized, all of the negative things that you hear about our youth today; but out of this entire hour-and-a-half of playing, do you know, I heard not one curse word out the mouths of one of those youth, because they saw a father figure that brought respect on children. And out of all that playtime with all of the competition going on, there was not one fight that broke out among them, because they saw a daddy that they respected, and because of that, they watched their mouths and they watched their behavior, because they saw somebody that cared that they could respect.

The revelation just hit me that we're going all over the world looking for mission fields, and I saw right here in the playing fields was a mission field of children that

needed fathers. And as I wondered still where all of their daddies were, it was not just boys; but it was girls, too.

On the way home, I began to see where their daddies were. I saw them cutting their grass with the lawnmower, worried more about the grass that was not even part of their own bodies, and their children are playing at the park. I saw them washing their cars, worrying about the dirt on their automobiles more than these children who needed development. I was able to look through some windows and saw them watching the game in there. It wasn't doing them any good, no matter who won or lost; but yet they show so much emotion over this game that was on while their children were out playing fatherless.

As I saw the phenomenon of missing fathers, I decided to look up and research and just see what the effect of a father missing from the life of a child is. These were the statistics that I found on the website [www.fathers.com](http://www.fathers.com). Children from fatherless homes are twice as likely to drop out of school. Fatherless children are twice as likely to engage in premarital sex and become teen parents outside of marriage. Nearly half of unwed teenage mothers go on welfare within one year of their baby's birth. Seventy percent of juveniles in state reform institutions grew up in single or no-parent situations. Sixty percent of America's rapists grew up in homes without fathers. Seventy-two percent of adolescent murderers grew up without fathers. Eighty percent of adolescents in psychiatric hospitals come from broken homes. Three out of four teenage suicides occur in homes where a parent has been absent. Premarital pregnancy, out-of-wedlock childbearing and absent fathers are the most common predictors of child abuse. Fatherless children are five times more likely to live in poverty compared to children living with both parents.

After seeing the lack of fatherhood in our world today and its result on the children, I started and my first title for this message that I was going to preach today was The Prodigal Father, because what I saw today was most of the prodigal children as mentioned in these statistics are the result of a prodigal father that left the home.

But I didn't want to dwell on the negative all day today, because it was such a positive day; but hopefully hearing these statistics will be enough to motivate some fathers who may hear this and who are not active in their children's lives to take action and to make a difference. And single mothers who even hear this, don't feel depressed by those statistics. You should just make sure that there's a male mentor that's positive in your children's lives. Even though I have seven children of my own, I've mentored many children who have no fathers throughout the years; I still do, and I even got messages this morning from them.

So, men, this should be a wakeup call for you. Men, go out and do likewise as you've heard. You heard the statistics. So I charge you today to make a difference, that the mission field is right in your own home, is right in your own neighborhood, is right

in your own local park, is right in your own local recreational center. You can make a difference.

The title of this message today is Lessons from Fatherhood... Lessons from Fatherhood. Indeed I've learned a lot of lessons from just being a father and from my father. It wasn't until I became a father that I could understand how much my Heavenly Father loved us and why He loved us so much. It's because we are His own and we were of His own being, made in His image. It wasn't until I had children of my own that I could really understand the love of the Heavenly Father. It wasn't until I became a father that I realized how almost two out of three marriages could end in divorce, but yet there were custody battles over the children, and no matter how much mommy and daddy fought, the daddies would still want to see and be a part of their children's lives. And it wasn't until I became a father that I realized how great of a sacrifice it had to be for a Father to give His only begotten Son to be tortured and crucified for others on a cross. You've got to be a father to fully understand giving up your one and only seed.

I just want to read a MountainWings' issue that I wrote a few years ago that just shows and illustrates the heart of fathering. When I look back at most of the issues that I've written for MountainWings, two-thirds have been about fatherhood. They have been about experiences with my children, so indeed they've had a big impact on me as a man. And the issue reads, "My wife and I took our three sons to the beach this year. I took my middle son out in the water with me as my wife played in the sand with the other two. I picked him up as we entered waters that approached my kneecaps. I held him close to my chest, because the water chilled our bones too much for either of us to hold our own body heat. As I held him, my eyes gently rested on the endless expanse of waves that rolled along the surface ever so rhythmically. My eyes then drifted higher to the invisible line that separates the ocean from the sky with exactness. I then beheld the beauty of the sky and everything that it contained. It seemed like time had stopped, and the only two people on earth were my son, John, and I. At that moment I had the realization that this would be a great time for a lesson in life. This was John's first time in the ocean, and I knew there were certain things that even school couldn't teach him. John was only two years old at that time, and I knew his mind would be highly impressionable at this age, considering his logic properties had not been fully developed yet. Father started with the first lesson on the beach of life. I said, 'John, do you see all of this water? Who do you think created the ocean?' Before, I taught him, I just wanted to see what kind of childish, cartoon-minded answer he would give me. He looked out over all of the countless ways, even though countless in his little mind was anything over ten, and surveyed the landscape. And little did I know that my two-year-old was about to give me an untaught answer that half of the professors at Harvard University would have disagreed with. He answered not even in his normal answering tone, where the answer comes out with such a degree of doubt that it sounds more like a question. With all the force of his little lungs, he

shouted out three little, but powerful words with such confidence that it reverberated down the beach: 'God did it!' Even though I was the teacher and had years of training through an engineering degree at one of the nation's top schools, there was no more that I could add to this preschooler's answer.

"So I went on to the next question: 'John, do you see the blue space above the water that we call the sky? Who do you think created that?' As he looked up and again considered the vastness of space, he again shouted out, 'God did it!' Again, there was nothing I could add to his answer.

"I brought my son out here and was experiencing a moment of inspiration. I was the daddy, and he was the son. I was determined to teach him something, so I went on to my third question: 'Okay, John. Those are very big things and, yes, God did create them. But do you see that small little bird flying right above our heads? Who do you think created that little thing?' Almost before I could muster a smile from the satisfaction of finally being able to teach my son something, out came the answer: 'God did it!'

"I figured for my last question I'd better get a little tricky with him. I guessed that since he knew that I was his father and he knew that I had something to do with getting him into this world, not to mention I was holding him up from dangerous waters as he couldn't swim, with a scholar's pride I asked my final question: 'John, who created you?' 'God did it.'"

I asked no more questions that day. That day I was the student, the learner. I learned that some answers are already within us. And there were things that I've learned being a father, and there were also many things that I've learned from my father.

As I've gone through life and grown in maturity, one of the ways that I found that have been the most accurate in measuring my maturity in life is not how much height I have, not how much weight I've gained, not how many school degrees that I've attained, not how many years that I've lived; but I found that my maturity has been best measured in life by the wisdom that I've realized and put into practice from my father.

When I was a child, I couldn't understand my father bringing sprouts, putting them on my plate and saying, "Eat these. They'll do you your body good." It didn't make sense for me; it just looked like daddy was trying to make me eat something nasty. He would make carrot juice and say, "Drink this. This will help your eyes and help your body." And I was thinking, "My eyes are just fine. I can see all the colors I need to see. Why do I need to drink this nasty stuff? It looks like I could just drink some Kool-Aid or Coca Cola and it'll do just fine."

He taught me business, and he taught me to take money from my paper route and save it, and he would take me to the credit union, and he would match a portion of whatever I would put in the credit union. He taught me the first form of 401k with an employer matching it. Even before businesses ever started doing that, my father first taught me matching funds and how to grow investments and savings.

He taught me getting up early in the morning when it didn't seem like you needed to get up that early. He taught me the power of positive thinking and setting goals and writing goals down and achieving those goals. I couldn't understand all of these things as a youth; but as I began to grow and mature and deal with the situations of life and raise and teach my own children and see that my own thinking was not accurate in certain areas, my father's wisdom would come back to me and say, "Ah, this is what daddy was trying to teach me." Every time I came to that realization, I found that I had grown and had matured in life.

My father taught us a system of priorities in our lives. He said, "Children, keep God first, family second and business third." We saw all the big businessmen that built businesses and made all of this money; but yet when they got the businesses built, they lost their families. They ended in divorce. But my father, we saw him stay home and conduct business over the phone so that he could be there and raise us and see about his family. He taught us that you only have one body in this life and to take care of it. It's your most valuable physical possession, that people spend their health trying to get money, then they spend all of that money trying to get their health back.

Teachers would often ask us in school, "Go through history and find a leader that you can use to pattern your life after that's your biggest role model." The other students would go through all the pages of history, and when she would ask me, "Who is your role model out of all of history?" I would always give the same answer, even as a young boy, and I would say, "Teacher, I can't find him in a history book; but he lives in the house with us. He eats at the same table with us, he plays golf with me three times a week. I call him daddy."

I just want to read to you one more MountainWings' issue that I had authored a few years ago called "Daddy Daycare". It gives you a little more humorous side of fatherhood; but it's real, and it's the day-to-day life of what we go through us fathers and even mothers. It reads, "I respect all mothers in the world. Just one day with my three boys, I felt like I was a Boy Scout leader. I told myself I would take the kids off my wife's hands for a day, just to give her a break. What I didn't realize is, it would almost break me. And I handle computers and people all day, so I thought this would be a breeze for me. What I didn't understand was, there's a big difference in handling big people and little people all day. Big people may roll their eyes and mumble at their desks. Little people will fall flat on the floor and start kicking and screaming at the top of their lungs, and in public at that. Big people

leave their desks junky. Little people will have you wondering if there's even a desk in the room. Big people will leave crumbs from eating at their desks. Little people leave applesauce on the desk and leave whole chips and cookies on it.

“Anyway, I took my kids to the mall and decided to wear them out there some. I just figured I get tired pretty quick if I go to the mall with my wife while she's shopping, maybe the same phenomenon will happen to the boys. After all, they're just smaller versions of a man, right? Wrong. In the mall, they're bigger versions of a man, compressed down in such a manner that all of the exercise gets converted into energy. I think I finally just figured out what  $E=mc^2$  means. It should have dawned on me that it wasn't a good idea when I entered the mall with them, and the first store employee I saw, who was a mother herself, asked where their mother was. I told her, 'At home. They have their father here; that's all that matters, right?' 'Oh,' she said as she saw the boys revving their engines was, 'Let me know how you do it on the way out, because I can't do it.' Just to let you know, the boys are ages five, three and two. As I turned around to get going in the mall with the pride of a father handling things, I saw the three- and two-year-old, but didn't see the five-year-old. I asked them where their brother was and they shrugged their shoulders as if to say, 'You're the daddy. Am I my brother's keeper?' After frantically searching for him, I found him playing hide-and-go-seek under a mannequin. The rest of the time in the mall was as your imagination could see it. I don't have time to chronicle the whole experience unless I was writing a complete book; but on the way out, I saw the same lady, and she asked how I did it again. My answer was, 'All I can tell you is, I won't be doing it again.'

“And on the way home, just glad to have them fastened in their seatbelts, the five-year-old says, 'Dad, I have to use the bathroom.' I told him, 'We'll be home in about five minutes' and just kept driving, and at the next light he informed me, 'Dad, I just want to let you know that my pee-pee is coming out.' Needless to say, I pulled over in the middle of the road into a carwash and, not seeing a bathroom and holding pee-pee distance, I had to let him use the carwash drains. I figured, 'If he doesn't go right now, he would go in the car and it'll all end up in this drain anyway.'” So even though it may have looked like a good idea in a movie, you don't have to worry about this dad opening up a daycare anytime soon.”

We're out of time, and I thank you for joining us here at Brothers of the Word. You can go to [AirJesus.com](http://AirJesus.com) to hear this message in its entirety. It's Message No. 8211. Be sure to send it to all of the fathers, all of the heads of household, that you know. Thank you so much for joining Brothers of the Word, because, Brother, you need to be a father.