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LANDMINES WALKING WISELY IN EVIL DAYS



Landmines Session Five – “Save the Boys and Girls”

Tonight we're going to be in Ephesians 6

We've been in Ephesians 5 and basically what he's saying is that we need to be careful how we walk because the days are evil. You don't want to be drunk with wine because you can't walk carefully and you make bad choices.

There are two landmines that fathers have to be aware of.

The first landmine is the Landmine of Distance.

- Samuel Olsherson – “The curse of fatherhood is distance. And the good fathers spend their lives trying to overcome it.” It is so easy to get distant from our children.
- When scripture addresses fathers, it is addressing both fathers and grandfathers.
 - Deuteronomy 6:1-2 shows that both are included.
- When you're a grandfather you're kind of the wingman. It is different, but it is strategic.
- Ephesians 6:4 – “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” – Save the boys and don't forget your girls.

The second landmine is the Landmine of Distraction

- You can be physically present, but be emotionally distant.
- The Ed Sullivan show, a guy had sticks and dishes, he'd spin them on the stick. He'd run back and forth to keep them spinning. – That is fathering. It is exhausting. It is distracting.
- There are four land-marks in Ephesians 6:4 that help keep you balanced, and keep you in check, and keep you effective.
 - Fathers are to raise their children:
1) *Fairly*, 2) *Tenderly*, 3) *Firmly*, and 4) *In-the-Lord*.

1) Fathers Are To Raise Their Children *Fairly*

- Colossians 3:21 – Do not exasperate them. Do not frustrate them.
- Ephesians 6:4 – Do not provoke your children to anger. When you get angry it is because something is not right.
 - Neglect
 - Constant Criticism and Critique
 - Favoritism
 - Over-protection, smothering them
 - Reliving your frustrated life or past glory through them.

- Mez McConnell, Pastor in Scotland – Video found at: <https://vimeo.com/57561798>
- Scotland – they were once alive for Christ, now dead.
- Mez McConnell – blog post found at: <https://20schemes.com/2015/ding-dong-the-wicked-witch-is-dead-a-pastors-response-to-the-death-of-a-childhood-abuser/>
 - “Because of my childhood, they [*his daughters*] have never known violence.”
 - “Because I know Jesus.”
- When I was a young rookie pastor doing counseling, about 90% of the time, the symptoms weren't the issue, the issue, once you got right down to it, was that the man in that home was not being the man.
- God uses our suffering. He brings good out of our suffering.
- Treating kids with justice. God is just. God is good.
- When you screw up, you go make it right, quickly.

2) Fathers Are To Raise Their Children *Tenderly*

- “Bring them up” has the sense of nourish or to feed
- There are times that your sons are going to need tenderness.
- Not many verses about how to treat daughters. I tell guys, I use the verses that show me how to relate to my wife and I apply them to my daughter. One day she'll probably grow up to be a wife.
- Patricia Cornwell – grew up without a father
- Steven Colbert – “America used to live by the motto, ‘Father knows best’. Now we're lucky if father knows he has children.”
- If a girl knows what a man should look like, how he should treat a woman, she will take the template of your example and use it to filter men.
- She needs to know that she has a protector. And that you'll do it appropriately, but you'll handle something.
- According to a 2003 study of 700 girls, girls whose fathers left the family earlier in their lives had the highest rates of both early sexual activity and adolescent pregnancy, followed by those whose father left at a later age.
- Relationships with these kids is Holy ground

- Repair of the damage can happen. Rebuilding trust. It doesn't happen overnight in the Christian microwave. I can take years.
- Last verse in the Old Testament is Malachi 4:6 – “He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.” – God loves to restore

3) Fathers Should Raise Their Children *Firmly*

- Ephesians 6:4 – “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”
- *Discipline* – what is done to a child
- *Instruction* – what is said to a child
 - They should always go together.
- The book of Proverbs says a lot about how to discipline a child. It is inspired by God.
 - Proverbs 19:18 – “Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire his death.”
- *Dare to Discipline* by James Dobson, drenched in scripture and common-sense and wisdom.
- I feared my dad. I loved my dad. I respected the heck out of my dad.
- Eli, the high priest. His sons were utterly corrupt.
 - 1 Samuel 2:22-29;34 3:7-13
- If you don't disciple you are honoring your child above the Lord.
- In Ephesians 6:4, the same Greek word for instruction is used in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) for when Eli didn't rebuke his children. He didn't instruct them. He didn't discipline.

4) Fathers Are To Raise their Children *In the Lord*

- When I raise my kids in the Lord, I'm under the control of the Spirit, and I'm under the control of the scriptures. It makes a tremendous difference in a family.
- John Knox – When he brought the gospel to Scotland, fathers began to be saved and began to lead their families.
- “The only way to leave our children blessed and happy is to leave them rightly instructed in God's true religion, the Bible...”
- Every family is a small civilization, a small church. Every man is the pastor. Grandpa is the pastor-emeritus.
- “My brethren you are ordained of God to rule your own houses in the fear of the Lord and according to his word. Within your houses, I say in some cases, you are the bishops and you are the kings. Your wife, children, servants, family, they're your congregation and charges.”
- *How The Scotts Invented The Modern World* – Arthur Herman
 - He didn't like John Knox, but he grudgingly had to give him credit. As a result of Knox, even after his death, schools were set up so that boys and girls could read the scripture.

- Church is comprised of families.
- In a family, you're the pastor.

- Don't think or dwell on how you've screwed up.
- Philippians 3:13 – "...forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead..."
 - I can't do anything about the past.
 - I do have tonight and tomorrow.

Prayer, Thank you Father that you're perfect. We're deeply flawed. Help us to be mindful of the absolute high-calling that we have on our lives. Make us quick to confess. Heal our sins. In Jesus' name, Amen.