

## **A SERMON FOR FATHER'S DAY – 2010**

**By Bob Young**

### **Introduction**

I never know what to do with Father's Day. Father's Day did not exist when I was a boy.

What I mean by that is I did not have a father I knew. He was gone before I was aware of my surroundings and was only a fleeting presence at Christmas.

I love the Bible passages about our Heavenly Father, but frankly as I was growing up, I had no point of reference about fathers—their role, support, encouragement, mentoring.... Single mothers did not tell their sons that kind of thing.

Over the years, I have come to understand the concept of father better. For one thing, I am one. I do not claim I am a good one, but I am one. As I look back on my experiences, I think I was a better father from a distance than up close.

The movie, "The Blind Side", gave me a new insight into fathers and into parenting. "The role of parents is to give their children a chance." If you know the movie, a wealthy WASP couple adopts a black kid from the other side of the tracks. The movie makes clear the reality of our world: some children do not have a chance. No direction, controls, consequences. No parental support, no encouragement.

### **Parents give children a chance to succeed in two dimensions.**

#### **-1- Roots, Foundations**

- Education: formal and experiential; the education must include principles and values
- Example: moral training, relationship training, spiritual training
- Basic skills—consistent with the knowledge base of the parents
- Includes decision making—a parent helps children make good choices
- Financial support through the formative years

#### **-2- Wings, Opportunities**

- Parents give children a chance to become all that they can become
  - Independence, developing ability to make correct choices
  - Sometimes children do not take advantage of the opportunities they are given
  - They get the roots but not the wings, or they get the wings without the roots
  - Sometimes you do not understand what they got until later
- Sister Taylor, her son. She died; he was baptized the next Sunday
- Some fail to seize the opportunities through bad choices
  - Unfortunate, but role of parents is primarily to give children a chance
  - Provide foundations and opportunities
- Parents face hard questions—questions empty nesters often have to deal with....
  - Once parents give children a chance to succeed, what is continuing obligation?
  - Should parents continue to do foundational things?
  - Should parents continue to provide opportunities? (finances to reach a new goal, fund a new initiative, but probably not supportive financing)
  - Is there a need for continuing financial support? (such may work against the responsibilities and goals of parents)
- Children who are dependent may not perceive their own capacities, own abilities, and may have lowered self-esteem.

## FOUR PRINCIPLES

In 2009, Brad McCoy, Colt's dad, spoke at the Dallas Christian Leadership Prayer Breakfast, an annual breakfast started by Tom Landry and other Dallas leaders over 40 years ago with variety of speakers. Brad McCoy talked about fathering—how his wife and he raised Colt and his two other boys according to four principles. As one would expect from a Christian father, the principles are deeply rooted in Scripture.

**“Prepare your child for the path, not the path for your child.”**

Both kids and parents need to hear this. The road is rough, narrow and hard to find. We have a book (the Bible), a map, and our God to help us. We must prepare ourselves and our kids for moments in life when doors open and close. Dads who are serious about fighting for their kids diligently prepare them. Prov 22:6; Eph. 6:1-4

**“Prepare to be your best.”**

This was a family motto. 1 Cor. 9:24, “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.” His constant reminder to his sons was *“Do your best and be a leader!”* Jim Collins, *Good to Great*, says that good is the enemy of greatness. We don't aim high and we miss. We convince ourselves that we are aiming high, but we are afraid of failure. Most times, we aim low and hit the mark, and feel good because we are succeeding. Phil 1:7-9

**“Be a Leader.”**

We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses – great leaders that we can draw from and that our kids can draw from. We are all at the mercy of time and money: How do you spend your time and money? How we spend our time and money is a direct reflection of where our priorities are. Ghandi: *“I will not let anyone walk through my mind with dirty feet.”* Colt turned this phrase into his own words: *“Thoughts become things.”*

**“Prepare for Open and Closed Doors.”**

Those of you who know the story know that what looked like an open door for Colt quickly became a closed door when he got hurt in the first series of plays in the 2010 National Championship at the Rose Bowl. After the loss, Brad went to his son's room to cheer his son up. He found Colt finishing a devotional reading: *“My positive energy must be better than my negative energy. My certainty must be me stronger than my doubt. The battle is won before I ever start the fight. I choose faith over fear. Leave a legacy of excellence, love, dedication and service.”* Jeremiah stated, *“Blessed is the man whose trust is in the Lord.”* Trust in the Lord is the key to both open and closed doors. Help your children be ready for both.

## CONCLUSION

I got to know my father once I reached adulthood. He came to my college graduation, and we began to rebuild a relationship. I do not know whether it was ever a typical father-son relationship, but there was some level of mutual love and respect.

He was supportive of my goals—proud of my ministry.

We left OVU and returned to the middle of the US in 2002 to be closer to him and also to Jan's dad.

After my dad died in June 2005, Bailey McBride said, “That is so sad, you moved back to be near him and now he is gone.” I reminded Bailey that I had had 3 good years.

Jan's dad died at the end of 2006 and we experience many of the same emotions again.

It is a strange feeling to be the anchor, the oldest in the family.

But we have our roots, we have our wings.

Our roots are in the Lord. He will never leave us or forsake us. He is a true father.

I want you to know that the heavenly father is available to every person, 24/7, a real father, our source, our comfort, our support, our provider.