

## The Marks of a Godly Man

By Mark Jarvinen

Warren knew deep in his heart that his family deserved to be a higher priority than his work. ***“But how can I quit my job until I find something else that will pay me the same amount of money?”*** he reasoned. Finally, after a year of struggle, he realized it came down to obedience and faith. He turned in his resignation. To his surprise, his boss offered him a consultant role to maintain the firm’s largest client. It meant a pay cut, but it still provided a livable salary.

Relatives and friends noticed a change in Warren right away. ***“You’re a different person,”*** they told him. Soon he picked up a book by Gary Smalley and John Trent entitled ***The Hidden Value of a Man***, and learned more about God’s plan for him as a family man. The book compared a man’s authority to **two different kinds of swords**. In his job as a boss, there had been pressure on him to be forceful and swing **a big, silver sword** to make his will known to others and to attain his goals. But in the close relationships of home and family, a defter, gentler touch was needed, more like **a delicate, golden dagger**. Warren realized that all too often he had come home swinging his big silver sword – being forceful, decisive, adversarial, and authoritarian, when what he needed to be for his family was kind, sensitive, understanding, and responsive. Warren’s wife noticed that he went from a man distracted by his work, who didn’t even know the names of his children’s teachers, to a caring man who not only drove his youngest daughter to pre-school, but

walked her in and helped her get settled. Since the “new Warren” showed up, his kids had become happier and had done better in school than ever before. On the first Father’s Day after his change, Warren’s 12 year- old son gave him a gift. In Warren’s own words:

***“He gave me a beautiful painting he’d done for me – of two swords; a big, silver one and a smaller, more delicate and beautiful gold one. I had the picture framed to hang in my office as a constant reminder of the kind of father I want to be.”***  
(Adapted from Greg Lewis, *The Power of a Promise Kept*, pp. 101-109).

Warren had finally learned what it takes some men a long time to recognize, and sadly some never do – that **the lives we lead don’t just affect us, but the generations that follow.** Men, how shall we live our lives today in order to positively influence another generation? We’ve been talking about leaving a legacy in the past couple of messages. Today, we’ll consider the theme: **“The Marks of a Godly Man.”**

## **I. A GODLY MAN LOVES HIS WIFE.**

**Ephesians 5:25** says, ***“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her....”***

Husbands, what does it mean to love your wives? Does it mean to have passion for her and a desire for intimacy? Does it mean to have strong feelings for her? Your answer is **“Of course! That’s a no brainer!”** But men, it’s that and more. It means you are **willing to sacrifice for her** – to lay down your life for her just like

Christ laid down His life for us. The **greatest gift a man can give his children is to love his wife.**

**How many of you husbands here today would take a bullet for your wife and family?** I hope it didn't take you too long to answer! 😊 Hypothetically, we probably all would. **Here's a harder question.** How many here would spend a Saturday shopping with your wife, just to be with her and to do something you know she enjoys? Now that's actually **more than hypothetical**, isn't it? That's something you actually could do. **You're saying, "Pastor, stop! What are you trying to do to me?"** But men, that's what loving your wife is all about – it's being considerate of her. **I Peter 3:7** says:

***"Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers."***

When we are not respecting our wives and being considerate of them, we are sinning. Our prayers will be hindered because of that sin, according to this passage. Men are likely to say, ***"I provide for my family's needs and make sure they're safe, what more do you expect?"*** Sacrifice and consideration means respecting our wives for all that they bring to the table in terms of meeting our needs and the needs of our families. It also means considering their emotional needs – notice I said **"considering"** their emotional needs, I didn't say **"understanding"** their emotional needs – that's something we men can only attempt to do. But that means spending time together and listening to our wives. In case you didn't know this, on average,

females speak about 20,000 words per day compared to 7,000 per day for males. The big temptation for husbands is to tune out after their wives have talked for awhile. Active listening is what wives yearn for from their husbands. For me, this means putting my phone down, or turning off the TV and having a conversation that includes words like **“How did that make you feel?”** Or **“Tell me more about that.”**

As men, we get distracted by our own selfishness, often dwelling on the negatives in our spouse. She doesn't cook enough, clean enough, she puts the kids needs ahead of mine, etc. Perhaps you feel like your wife **nags** too much ... I heard a lady say once, (jokingly but with a degree of seriousness) that **a perfect husband is one who cooperates with his wife's efforts to improve him.** In a good marriage, both partners should be able to receive wisdom and guidance through the other without fear of being misunderstood. About the **nagging wife** – someone once said, ***“Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the Church, remembering that if you treat your wife like a thoroughbred, you'll never end up with a nag.”*** There's wisdom in that. A Godly man loves his wife.

## **II. A GODLY MAN TRAINS HIS CHILDREN.**

**Ephesians 6:4** says,

***“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”***

**Proverbs 22:6** says, ***“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”***

Training of children involves two things: teaching and discipline.

**First, let's consider a Dad's responsibility to teach.**

Fathers, it's your responsibility to see that your children are learning the ways of God. What does this mean? Allow me to draw an analogy from the **Indianapolis 500** auto race. Every year since 1911, in the interest of safety, this race has used a rolling start with the use of a pace car. The pace car leads the starting field on one lap around the course at a prescribed speed, 55 mph, allowing each driver to warm up his engine and tires, and then at the conclusion of the lap, it quickly pulls off the track and the race begins with the cars already in motion. The pace car "**sets the pace**" for the other cars. Like the race cars at Indy, a family needs someone to set the pace for the race of life through precept and example. Ideally, that's a father's responsibility. (*Adapted from The Effective Father, Gordon McDonald, pp. 59-60*).

One thing a Dad can do as a pacesetter for his family is to **engage the family in worship** through active participation and by making it a priority. In his book entitled **Fearless**, Max Lucado, a pastor in San Antonio, TX, tells about serving Communion to his congregation one Sunday morning. He hears a small boy asking, "**What's that Daddy?**" In hushed tones, the father explains the meaning of the bread and then offers a prayer. Then the cup passes by. Once again, the boy asks, "**What's that, Daddy?**" The father whispers how the wine represents the blood that Jesus shed on the cross. Then he prays. What a wonderful example of a Dad setting

the pace for his young son in worship. But there's more to the story. Lucado realized as he observed this father-son duo that this Dad was **David Robinson**, star center for the **San Antonio Spurs** from 1989-2003, with his **six-year old son, David Jr. sitting on his lap**. Less than 24 hours earlier David had led the Spurs in scoring in a play-off game against the Phoenix Suns. Within 24 hours from then, David would be back in Phoenix, playing another play-off game. But sandwiched between these two nationally televised, high stakes basketball games was **David the dad**. Not David the MVP or Olympic Gold Medal winning David, but David the father explaining holy communion to David the son. Lucado concludes:

***“Of the events of that weekend, which mattered most? The basketball games or the communion service? Which will have eternal consequences? The points scored on the court? Or the message shared at church? What will make the biggest difference in young David’s life? Watching his dad play basketball or hearing him whisper a prayer?” (Lucado, Fearless, pp. 60-61.)***

**Secondly, Dads set the pace in terms of discipline in the home.**

It's both parents' responsibility to correct inappropriate behavior in children. **Proverbs 23:13-14** says:

***“Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.”***

When we do not correct inappropriate behavior, we are not helping ourselves or our kids. When they do things that are wrong, we need to discipline them so they will not grow up thinking they can do what they want without consequences. It's actually unloving not to

discipline. **Hebrews 12:6** says that “... ***the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.***” In the realm of our families, the author of Hebrews continues in **12:8**, saying, “***If you are not disciplined ..., then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.***” Parental discipline carried out in love engenders respect in the children who receive it. Dads assume a major role in this process of discipline.

### **III. A GODLY MAN FEARS THE LORD.**

**Psalms 112:1-2** says,

***“Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands. His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.”***

In this context “**fear**” means a “**reverential awe**” of God. When we understand who God is in his holiness and grace, the psalmist tells us that we will be blessed and that our children will be “**mighty in the land.**” Thus, we see that deep respect for God and his ways is tied directly to our ability to leave a Godly legacy to future generations.

Now it’s true that we’re all susceptible to poor life decisions because of the old Adam within us, our sin nature that fills us with willfulness and pride. Thank God for His promise of forgiveness through Christ our Lord. But the fear of the Lord, deep respect for God, will tend to guide us away from these poor life decisions and remind us that God’s thoughts and ways are higher than our thoughts and ways.

*The captain of the ship looked into the dark night and saw faint lights in the distance. Immediately he told his signalman to send a message: **"Alter your course 10 degrees south."***

*Promptly a return message was received: **"Alter your course 10 degrees north."***

*The captain was angered; his command had been ignored. So he sent a second message: **"Alter your course 10 degrees south--I am the captain!"***

*Soon another message was received: **"Alter your course 10 degrees north--I am a seaman third class Jones."***

*Immediately the captain sent a third message, knowing the fear it would evoke: **"Alter your course 10 degrees south--I am a battleship."***

*Then the reply came: **"Alter your course 10 degrees north--I am a lighthouse."***

There are plenty of voices shouting at us through the fog. We need the clear and solid voice of a lighthouse in our lives – a friend who is there with the right advice about where to go and how to get there. That voice, of course, is the voice of God in His Word (***Sherm Nichols, Sermon Central***).

**Proverbs 9:10** says, ***"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."*** It is through the wisdom gained from having a proper respect for the Lord and His Word that we will grow in faith, love our wives, and train our children in a manner that pleases God and glorifies Him, leaving a legacy for those who follow after us. **A-men.**