

Proverbs 14:26 | “Godly Fathers Bless Their Home”

Preached on June 16, 2024 by Pastor Matt Brown

You can turn in your Bibles to Proverbs 14, verse 26. *[pause]*

Today is Father’s Day, and so it naturally leads us to think about fathers, and I came upon Proverbs 14:26 once while reading through the book of Proverbs.

And it shows the great blessing of a godly father. *[pauseeee]*

The importance of fathers has been devalued and diminished in our culture over time. *[pause]*

Think about how fathers on TV shows or movies are portrayed.

They are many times portrayed as kind of dumb or a goof, and that’s it. *[pause]*

Sometimes they are shown as distracted or uninvolved, and sort of just taking up space. *[pauseeee]*

Now certainly there are fathers out there who fit that bill, but what happens when people are bombarded with that image time and time again?

They start to trivialize fatherhood, as if it is unnecessary to a healthy family. *[pauseeee]*

In an opinion piece published in *The New York Times*, Jane Mattes, a psychotherapist, says that fathers are “not indispensable”.¹ *[pause]*

She states, “As more women are graduating from college and are able to provide a sufficient income to support a family, it is no longer necessary for them to marry in order to support a child.” *[pause]*

She points to the fact that many women are now choosing to just have children on their own, rather than risk having a man who isn’t a good husband and father.

And she claims that it doesn’t impact the children, for they can just have positive influences from other people. *[pause]*

She ends her article by saying that the organization she founded was 30 years old, and she says, “We have seen a generation of our children grow up – and turn out just fine.” *[pauseeee]*

Really? Are they “just fine”?

Is it perfectly acceptable to just have one parent “by choice” because children will just be influenced by others, so it will all work out? *[pauseee]*

¹ Mattes, Jane. “Fathers Can Be Valuable, but Not Indispensable.” *The New York Times*, June 4, 2013, www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/06/03/what-are-fathers-for/fathers-can-be-valuable-but-not-indispensable.

Do you see how devalued the father's role is?

She's basically saying, "Yeah, it's nice to have a father, but if you don't, no big deal, it will all be 'just fine'". *[pauseeee]*

Another article was published in *The Atlantic*.²

In it, they claim that the impact of fathers may not be in their fatherhood, but in simply just adding an extra person to the mix.

It's the additional resources that another person brings that makes the difference, that's it. *[pause]*

So basically, it doesn't matter if it's a man as the second parent, but it's helpful to just have another person around. *[pauseeee]*

Is that really the testimony of the Bible? *[pause]*

Now we would certainly say that other people can influence kids for good.

Certainly, there are *some* children who turn out OK without a dad around.

But the structure that God has set up, and for which we should strive for is a father and mother, 2-parent home, centered around God. *[pauseeee]*

That is not merely some traditional family values that I'm holding onto and I just need to move into the 21st century.

No, that setup is the setup that God Himself has created and structured the family to be since the Creation, and it is the way to a healthy, stable home.

And a big part of this God-centered, healthy home is a father who fears the Lord. *[pauseeee]*

Proverbs 14:26 says, "In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge." *[pause]*

So the first thing that I would like to show you from this verse is that...

I. A godly father fears the Lord. (14:26)

It matters what kind of father that you are. *[pause]*

Christians, don't say, "Oh, as long as there's a father in the home, it doesn't matter how they live."

² This article was referenced by Roland C. Warren in "Are Dads Necessary? Ask Kids." *CNN*, June 21, 2010, www.cnn.com/2010/OPINION/06/20/warren.fatherhood/index.html.

Of course, we emphasize and push for fathers in the home, but we also know that those fathers ought to be *godly* fathers. *[pause]*

The Bible shows us that fathers can actually provoke their children, which leads their children to be discouraged.³

And we see examples of bad fathers like Eli the priest, who let his sons continue in wickedness⁴, and of wicked Israelite kings, who actually sacrificed their sons to idols.⁵ *[pause]*

So we don't just settle with saying, "As long as the father is in the home," rather, we point to God's Word, which teaches fathers to be godly fathers.

And an essential, big part of godly fatherhood is fearing the Lord. *[pauseeee]*

Now "fearing the Lord" can be an easily misunderstood concept. *[pause]*

It is not simply being terrified of the Lord, and that's it. *[pause]*

It's not like being terrified of spiders, ghosts, or heights—rather, it's a reverential fear.

It's an acknowledgment of the Lord as superior, majestic, glorious, and all-powerful. *[pauseeee]*

So yes, there's a healthy recognition that God is the judge, and could do with me as He well pleases, but it's tempered with a love and trust in this holy, all-powerful One. *[pauseeee]*

It's like if you had a good earthly father, you feared disobeying Him, but you knew that He was also kind and loving, so you loved him, trusted him, and drew near to him all the same.

That's sort of what the fear of the Lord is like. *[pause]*

It's a proper view *of* God, a proper reverence *towards* God, and a proper trust and love *for* God. *[pause]*

It's to think, "God is God and I am not."

Therefore, there is reverence in it, and humility in it. *[pauseee]*

It is the "fear of the Lord" that Proverbs says, which "is the beginning of wisdom."⁶ *[pause]*

So the fear of the Lord is the foundational posture of a person of faith, who lives a life of godliness and wisdom.

And because they have the ABC's right, they can live out the XYZ's of life. *[pauseeeee]*

³ Colossians 3:21 (see also Eph. 6:4).

⁴ 1 Samuel 2:22-25 (especially verse 29).

⁵ Ahab (2 Kings 16:3) and Manasseh (2 Kings 21:6).

⁶ Proverbs 9:10.

So fathers, the most important, helpful thing for you to be the father that God calls you to be is for you to fear Him. *[pauseeee]*

Do you acknowledge that God is God, and He calls the shots?

Do you humbly bow to His Word?

Do you trust Him, even when it's hard?

Do you love Him above all? *[pauseeee]*

You see, a proper view and reverence of God leads a father to shape his identity primarily as a child of God. *[pauseeee]*

Godly fathers think of themselves as children of God first.

For if you see yourself as a child of God, how could you act like *you* are the boss and *you* call the shots? *[pause]*

If you see yourself as a child of God, how could you treat other children of God as below you or in harmful, abusive ways? *[pause]*

But if you remember that you are primarily a child of God, who is loved, yet are also called to obey your Heavenly Father, it changes everything...

You submit your life, your actions, your values, your priorities under your Heavenly Father.

And now this fear of the Lord shapes everything. *[pauseeee]*

How am I to father? Well, what does my heavenly Father say?

How am I to love? Well, what does my heavenly Father show me? *[pauseee]*

Imagine the difference in our homes, if each father feared the Lord.

Wouldn't humility prevail? *[pause]*

Wouldn't men step up and say, "We are going to church, and we are going to serve."

And also, "We aren't going to do that because that's sinful, and we are going to do this, for God has called us to do this." *[pause]*

Wouldn't fathers provide and protect, lead and train, love and show mercy? *[pauseeee]*

What a wondrous picture!

This all goes back to a simple, yet critical thing: godly men fear the Lord. *[pauseeee]*

The macho man may say, "I fear nothing," but the godly man says, "I fear the Lord." *[pauseeee]*

And what does the proverb say? “In the fear of the Lord one has *strong confidence*.” [pause]

It’s due to your relationship with the Lord that a father can have a security that brings great assurance.

They find a refuge in the Lord, who is the one and only truly solid basis. [pauseeee]

Amidst a changing world, changing circumstances, changing pressures, and changing temptations, a man of God can have *confidence*. [pause]

This isn’t a confidence based on being a macho tough guy, but a confidence in the Lord. [pauseeeee]

In life, many men frequently go to either one of two extremes. [pause]

For some, they rely solely on their strength, and they become those who are domineering in their manhood.

And they often *misuse* their role. [pause]

But the other extreme is to be timid and weak, and not step up to be and do what God has called you to be and do.

And these men *neglect* their role. [pause]

Both of these kinds of men or kinds of fathers are looking for confidence and strength in the wrong place. [pause]

In the domineering man, he’s looking and trusting in his own strength.

In the weak man, he’s looking and feeling insecure about his own strength.

But our strength is not to be found in ourselves, but in the Lord.

It’s *in the fear of the Lord* that one has strong confidence. [pauseeee]

You see, men’s fundamental problem is not some sort of toxic, strong masculinity.

Men’s fundamental problem is not weakness, either.

No, their problem isn’t fundamentally that they are too strong or too weak, it’s that they aren’t strong in the Lord. [pause]

It’s that they don’t find their trust, their assurance, their confidence in God, but find it in other things, which lead to the misuse or neglect of their role. [pauseeeee]

If you find your confidence in your muscles and power, then you will misuse them, trying to show off your strength, in order to get the respect of others. [pause]

If you don't find strength in anything, then you will be a weak, timid man.

But when the fear of the Lord is your strength, then you have a *strong* confidence.

You have something solid, unchanging, and worthy to stand assuredly upon. *[pauseeee]*

Godly men are strong men only because their strength is the Lord. *[pause]*

Their strength is strength under control, for they have nothing to prove, for it's not their strength, but God's.

Their strength is strength used in loving ways, for they are modeling the strength of Christ.

[pauseeee]

“In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence.” *[pause]*

Men can have strong confidence, as they stand upon the truth, instead of being a wave tossed by the lies of the world or by whatever is trendy at the moment. *[pause]*

They can have strong confidence, as they are assured of their own forgiveness, and so can readily forgive others. *[pause]*

They can have strong confidence, as they are confident in the eternal life they possess so much so that they are willing to risk their lives for their families and for Christ. *[pause]*

They can have strong confidence in their God, so that no matter what comes their way, they can stand up to the task at hand. *[pauseeeee]*

When a godly father fears the Lord, he has strong security—he trusts the Lord. *[pause]*

When trials come, he says to his family, “Let's look to the Lord, for the Lord is mighty. He is in control.” *[pause]*

When temptation assails, he takes up the shield of faith, holds it in front of his family and says, “This will extinguish the flaming darts of the evil one.”⁷ *[pause]*

And when sorrows come, you find him with an open Bible in a prayer-soaked room. *[pause]*

That's a man who has strong confidence, for his refuge is his God.

It's his relationship with the Lord that leads him to a sure trust amid life's troubles. *[pause]*

It's not a self-confidence, nor a lack of confidence altogether, but a God-confidence that won't ebb and flow with the changing tides. *[pauseeeee]*

This is the kind of fathers we need, and this is the kind of fathers we need to be. *[pause]*

⁷ A reference to Ephesians 6:16.

But that's not the whole verse, for we also see the results of such godly fatherhood....

II. A godly father is a blessing to his children.

As I said earlier, many today think that fathers aren't essential, but interestingly, even research reveals the impact of godly fathers.

And one area of this impact is seen in church attendance. [pauseeee]

There was a Swiss study done back in the 1990's, which showed the impact of a father's church attendance or lack of attendance on his children. [pause]

In it, it found that "if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife is, only one child in 50 will become a regular [church attender]. [pause]

*[On the other hand,] if a father *does* regularly go, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers."*⁸ [pauseeee]

So apparently, it is primarily the father's practice of church attendance that makes the most difference in a child's life, as to whether they will follow that path. [pauseeee]

This is not to say that moms don't make an impact on their children, or that every child will fall in line with those statistics.

Rather, it simply shows us that fathers make a great impact on their children in regards to their faith. [pauseeee]

If a child doesn't see their father take interest in spiritual things, they will most likely think, "Well, he doesn't think it's important, so why should I?" [pause]

If the leader of the home doesn't consider something crucial, why would others in the family? [pause]

And those who are exceptions to this trend are only evidence of the grace of God! [pauseeee]

A godly father is truly a blessing to his family.

For just look at what the verse says, "In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge." [pauseeee]

As a father finds his security in God and puts His trust in Him, so his children are led to find refuge in the Lord, too. [pause]

The same refuge of a godly father becomes the refuge of his children—what a marvelous blessing! [pause]

⁸ Craven, S Michael. "Fathers: Key to Their Children's Faith." *The Christian Post*, June 19, 2011, www.christianpost.com/news/fathers-key-to-their-childrens-faith.html. (Italics and underlining is mine).

A godly father finds security and confidence in the refuge of God, and his children see this and are impacted...

They see their dad cling to Christ in even the darkest days.

They see their father follow God's Word, even when it's hard.

They see their dad have stability in life, for his life is secure in the Lord. *[pauseeee]*

What a blessing it is for a child to witness their dad have purpose, direction, and a foundation.

It isn't a wave-tossed home, but a stable home, for he finds his refuge in God. *[pauseeee]*

A father who fears the Lord becomes like an "oak of righteousness" for his children.⁹

They are taught and shown how to run to the Lord, find shelter in Him, and sit in peace under His wings. *[pauseeee]*

Fathers, do you realize the impact that you can have on your children?

Just think of what this verse is saying—it's saying that your godly life can impact future generations to come! *[pauseeee]*

Isn't that amazing to think about?

Leaving a legacy of faith, influencing generations after you for Christ: what a privilege and honor! *[pauseeee]*

What an opportunity, fathers, to be able to lead your children to find refuge in God.

In fact, let me share with you another proverb that shows us this truth...

Proverbs 20:7 says, "The righteous who walks in his integrity—blessed are his children after him!" *[pauseeee]*

So the children of those who live righteous, godly lives are blessed.

Why?

Because their parents demonstrate a firm adherence to God's Word by living it out.

And they get to see the good examples of their parents day-in and day-out. *[pauseeee]*

Now it won't be perfect, but they see a father and a mother, who are seeking to follow the Lord. *[pause]*

⁹ This phrase is used in Isaiah 61:3.

They see parents who promptly admit when they are wrong and readily forgive when others sin against them. *[pause]*

They see parents who struggle, but who cling to the feet of Jesus as their only hope and trust. *[pause]*

They see parents who model what it looks like to have the Lord as their refuge.

And often children are greatly impacted by this, and are led to follow the same path. *[pauseeee]*

But it's not only the example that they see, which causes children of a godly father to be blessed.

For children of a godly father are also blessed because they get to experience the benefits of a father, who treats them well and leads his home in righteousness. *[pauseeeee]*

He sacrificially leads and loves like Christ, putting the needs of his wife and children first. *[pause]*

He isn't domineering, but is a servant-leader.

Yet he also isn't a weak, passive, timid man, for he steps up to lead the home, as he has been called to do. *[pause]*

That kind of father is only going to bless his children because they have a safe place to call home. *[pause]*

They have a place seeping with grace, understanding, and forgiveness to live in. *[pause]*

They have a godly leader, who they can follow, and who they know will love them and treat them right. *[pause]*

They have a father, who points them to Jesus, and they know they can go to him at any time, and be pointed to Christ. *[pauseeeee]*

You see, a big role of a godly father is to wisely teach the truth. *[pause]*

Proverbs 4:1 says, "Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight." *[pause]*

It is expected of fathers to "bring [their children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."¹⁰

So fathers are teachers, trainers, and discipliners, who help guide, lead, and shape their children with the Word of God. *[pauseeeeeee]*

Fathers, how can you do that unless you fear the Lord? *[pause]*

¹⁰ Ephesians 6:4.

Fathers, how can you teach your children the truth, if *you* are neglecting it? *[pause]*

How can you train up your children in the right way, if you see church attendance as something that's not that important? *[pauseeee]*

Parents, your priorities and values will shape your children. *[pause]*

If you take church lightly, they will most likely take it even more lightly. *[pause]*

If you don't see God's Word as that important, they probably won't either. *[pauseeee]*

Think through how your life and actions are communicating your priorities and values.

Because kids can see through the public face that you put on. *[pause]*

You don't think they notice that you act one way in church and another way at home? *[pause]*

You don't think they notice that your faith isn't really real to you in the day-to-day grind of life? *[pause]*

Your faith has to be real to you first if you are going to be of great, lasting impact to your kids! *[pause]*

Your refuge must *actually* be the Lord, for them to find refuge in the same place. *[pause]*

If you only act like God is your refuge, they will know, and they will think, "Why would God be *my* refuge then?" *[pauseeee]*

A godly father is a blessing to his children, and the result is that the children will take pride in their father. *[pause]*

Listen to Proverbs 17:6, "Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their fathers." *[pause]*

The idea is that generally a godly father leads their children to glory in, boast, and be proud of him. *[pause]*

They look at their father and see someone honorable and respectable for the way he lives. *[pause]*

He's not someone that they are ashamed of or someone to be embarrassed about, but they look up to their father. *[pauseeee]*

This is the beautiful result of a godly father, they become someone that their children aspire to be, and someone who they can boast about.

Why?

Because he's someone who lives a Holy Spirit-led, Christ-centered, God-glorifying life.

And that's something commendable. *[pauseeee]*

Fathers, fear the Lord and your children will be blessed!

Now I know that this talk of godly fathers can bring some different thoughts and feelings. *[pauseeee]*

For some of you, you didn't have a godly father at all. *[pause]*

Maybe your dad wasn't around, or he just wasn't a godly man. *[pause]*

Please know that God works and saves people *despite* not having a father around or *despite* having a bad father.

And if you are here today with us, you are probably a testament to that. *[pause]*

Know that God, our Heavenly Father, is a Father to the fatherless.

He is the perfect, always present Father that you need, so look to Him!

He knows what you went through, He cares, and is ready for you to draw near to Him even more today. *[pauseeee]*

Or maybe you are here, and you are an older father.

Your kids are all grown up and out of the home, and as you look back on your past, you regret not being a better father. *[pause]*

Rest in the forgiveness of Christ—His grace flows to you.

But also know that it's never too late to be a godly father!

You can make an impact on your kids even now. *[pause]*

It's going to look different, for your kids are now adults and on their own, but you can be a godly influence in their lives...

You can be a godly example, give godly advice, and show them someone whose refuge is the Lord. *[pauseeee]*

You can also show them someone who has been impacted by grace. *[pauseee]*

Just imagine the impact on their hearts, when you so readily forgive them for something they did to you, and they are shocked at how you could do that. *[pause]*

Yet also, imagine the impact on their hearts, if you went to them and said, "I'm sorry for not being a godly father, that wasn't right."

I know that it has affected you in very deep, hurtful ways, will you forgive me?" *[pause]*

Even starting now, you can fear the Lord and bless your children. *[pauseeee]*

Let's all recognize, celebrate, and be thankful for the godly fathers we had or have, if we have one.

And let's recognize and acknowledge the big, important role that Christian fathers have, and encourage them along in their work. *[pauseeeee]*

So dads, I want you to think about this...

When your children are at the end of their lives, what will really matter? *[pause]*

Do you want to only bless your children in shallow, temporary ways? *[pause]*

Yeah, you blessed them by helping them know how to handle their finances or hit a baseball, and there's nothing wrong with that.

But do you want those kinds of things to be the *only* ways that you blessed them? *[pauseeee]*

Don't you want to bless them in ways that affect them both now *and* into eternity? *[pause]*

Don't you want them to be able to say, "Dad taught me to find my refuge in the Lord."?

And when they went through their hardest moments, they, too, looked to the Lord, and found shelter in His wings. *[pauseeee]*

Don't you want them to be able to say; "I was blessed by the example of my father, who had strong confidence, for His only hope and strength was the Lord."?

And now they find their refuge in the Lord, they impact their kids by showing them where to find refuge, and it goes on and on.

And the treasures in heaven will be great, and the lives impacted for eternity will be numerous. *[pauseeee]*

This doesn't promise that your kids will all turn out godly, if you would only find your refuge in the Lord, but you are called to do your part, and that's what matters.

So keep pointing them to Christ, and keep being faithful—that's what God cares about. *[pauseeee]*

And finally, let's strip it all down to the studs, so to say...

How can a father live this way? That is, what causes him to fear the Lord? *[pause]*

His heart has been impacted by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. *[pause]*

He has understood the truth that he was a sinner, who deserved only eternal condemnation.

Nothing good in himself is worthy of eternal life, nor does he deserve anything good at all.

Yet in marvelous grace, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross and take his place.

And then rise again, so securing eternal life for him, only because he placed his faith in Christ alone. *[pauseeee]*

It's that great act of sacrificial, substitutionary love, grace, and mercy that changes a man.

And through simple faith in Jesus, he is radically changed—a new creation in Christ.¹¹

And now he can't help but follow the Lord, seek to model his life after Christ, and reshape his values and priorities to align with God's. *[pausee]*

He won't be perfect, for he's a work-in-progress, but he wants to do what's right, and repents when he's wrong.

And he reminds himself, "I'm just a sinner saved by grace." *[pauseeee]*

A man like that fears the Lord, and so blesses his children. *[pause]*

May we all (no matter if we are fathers or not, men or women) fear the Lord, for He is worthy of serving with our lives.

And let's see what God will do through those who are simply faithful children of Him, our God and our Father.

¹¹ A reference to 2 Corinthians 5:17.