Fatherly Advice
by Bill Aumack

Happy Father's Day. Yeah, I guess that includes me, doesn't it? Today we're going to talk about fatherly advice, but not advice from me. Advice from some of our fathers in this book.

But you know, as I worked on this sermon between Mother's Day and today, I've been thinking about Mother's Day and Father's Day. And at first glance, those kind of seem the same. We honor our moms, we honor our dads. But these two days couldn't be farther apart. I mean, Mother's Day is like everybody's favorite day. Father's Day, not so much. The phone company tells us that more phone calls are made on Mother's Day than any other day of the year. Everybody wants to call home and talk to Mom. That's good. Phone company also tells us that more collect calls are made on Father's Day than any other day of the year. I was reading a story about a prison some years ago, and they offered a free card and a stamp to all the prisoners that wanted to send a card for Mother's Day. And they had nearly 100% participation. Everybody wanted a card and a stamp to write on Mother's Day. A few, maybe had moms that had passed away or something, but nearly 100%. So Father's Day rolls around, they think we'll do the same thing. You know how many prisoners took them up? 6! 6! Mother's Day and Father's Day aren't the same. This year. I've been watching some TV because I'm trying to watch the NBA playoffs, even though my team is not there, but still trying to watch. And during Mother's Day they were showing all these advertisements for this diamond heart-shaped pennant that you could get Mom. It's really nice. Was $3,800. Buy this for mom and you're sure to be the favorite child. You know what it was for dad? Cargo shorts at Target for 20 bucks. Mother's Day and Father's Day are not the same.

I did some research and found here a list of our favorite holidays. This was done by YouGov last year. February 2024, they did this survey. What do you think is the number one favorite holiday of all time of everybody? Christmas. Christmas. Thanksgiving was second. Thanksgiving was second. What's third? Easter? Halloween, then Easter, then Mother's Day. So Mother's Day comes in fourth. You know where Father's Day is ninth, which is better than I thought. We made it in just before the Super Bowl. It's not even a holiday. We beat out Election day, Earth Day, St Patrick's Day and President's Day. Oh, boy.

You know, and sometimes dads, we don't do so well in the media, right? If there's a TV show or movie with a dad in it, half the time it's Comic Relief or they're hopeless and they can't do anything and they mess everything up. And sometimes we don't do so well there. And

sometimes it feels like, as a dad, that no matter what you do, somebody's out to get you, right? If you behave in this certain way, half of the women hate it. So if you behave this way, half the women hate it. And if you behave this way, half the women hate it. And if you do anything, the other half of the women hate it. There's just no way to win. Maybe ladies feel the same way, too. I don't know. But sometimes you just feel like there's no way to win. And I know some fathers feel like, you know, my wife and my daughters, they expect me to be on my high horse and save the day, and they'd rather see me go down in flames than admit I was struggling and needed some help. And it can be tough to be a dad.

So I thought we'd look in the Bible, find a great father example and learn some wonderful lessons from that. And I searched and I searched and I searched and I searched, and there's not really a lot of great examples in the Bible. Maybe there's a lot of great examples of what not to do. We got a lot of those. And part of the thing is, we don't have a chapter on parenting, right? There's a love chapter. There's a faith chapter. There's no here's how to parent chapter. So instead of looking at one person, I decided, let's look at several people, and we'll put together these several bits that we learned from people along the way, because we don't have a lot of information about how these people were parents. Take, for example, Joseph, Jesus's father. We assume that he did a good job. He and Mary raised Jesus. They did a good job, but we don't really know what they did. I mean, look at Joseph's life. What do we know about it? Well, when he found out Mary was pregnant, he was going to get rid of her until the angel said, don't do that. And then he was going, you know, when the angel told him to leave Bethlehem and go to Egypt, when he did that, when the angel said, leave Egypt and go back home, he did that. And he left Jesus in Jerusalem for three days by himself. That's all we got. So I don't. You know, I think he was a good dad. I think he did okay. But we don't have a lot of detail.

So let's look at a couple of these stories. I think three. We're looking at four people today. I think three of them are pretty well known. One, maybe not so much. I've put in some text here so that you can look these stories up later if you happen to be unfamiliar with it. So get out your sermon notes. Let's dive in.

Our first one is **Noah**. And what we learn from him is a **strong moral compass**. Okay, so we all know the story of Noah and the flood and building the ark, right? And this takes place in **Genesis 6 through 9**. And, you know, God looks at the world and says, it's so bad, I'm going to blow it up and start over and realize how short of a time this is. This is Genesis 6. Genesis 1 ends with, it was very good. And in Genesis 6, we're like, I'm blowing it up. I mean, things have gone downhill quickly. The chapter before this kind of lists the generations. And the way I count it looks like Noah's maybe the ninth generation. Maybe somebody that's more expertise in genealogy would count that differently. But it looks like he's the ninth

generation. So from nine generations, we've gone from it was good to I'm blowing it up. And of course, we know that Noah finds grace. Noah's following God, and we don't even really know how he did that. He didn't have a Bible. He didn't have a temple. He didn't have a priest. How does he even know what to do to follow God? Methuselah was still around. Maybe he's sharing advice. We don't know. But we know that Noah is following God. And not just Noah, but he's gotten his sons to follow God, and they're wives to follow God. And God says, you know, build the ark. And of course, this was a big task. The Bible doesn't tell us how long it took, but if you do some math, it looks like at least 100 years, maybe 120 years. Maybe there were some breaks in there. We don't know, but it was a long time. Now I'm going to pick on one of my friends that's here today, and he doesn't know I'm going to do this, but he's a dad, so it's okay. Let's suppose my friend Eloy starts to build a big old boat out in the middle of Colorado. Would you think Eloy was okay? Not a lot of water out there in the middle of Colorado. Why are you building an ocean going ship in the middle of Colorado? How are you going to get that out there, Eloy, you goofball. Too much time looking at rocks, Eloy. And I'm teasing, Eloy, but don't you think the people of Noah's time did the same thing? Let's go see what the kook's doing today. Go make fun of him. I don't know. The Bible doesn't say that, but it's logical to assume that that happened. The Bible doesn't say that Noah preached to him, although the New Testament says Noah was a preacher of righteousness. So maybe Noah took breaks and talked to the people and tried to convince them to get on the ark. I don't know. But have you ever been criticized for something that kind of hurts? You don't like being criticized, but you can kind of deal with it, you know, it's one day, it's done. Noah got criticized for 120 years. I mean, that makes rolling out of bed in the morning a little tough. 120 years. Anybody here 100 years old? We haven't even reached that yet, right? I mean, that's a whole lifetime plus. So I think that was kind of tough. But Noah has a strong moral compass and he holds the path. He knows where he's supposed to go and he holds true to that path.

And dads, it's impossible to raise your children to be right in God's sight unless you have a strong moral compass that's based on the Bible, what the Holy Spirit's impressing you and prayer. You can't do it on your own. You can't do it on your own.

And you know, outside of parenthood, imagine how much better your life would be if your boss or your employees or your co workers knew that you were trustworthy. They could trust you with issues, they could trust you with problems, they could trust you with money. You are trustworthy because you have a strong moral compass and you know where you're going. Wouldn't that be amazing?

Now, some of you may be saying, too late for that. I kind of already messed up... cats out of the bag. Can't put it back in. The next story's for you.

This is **Manasseh**. Who here knows Manasseh? Who's knows who Manasseh is? Couple of us. Let's open our Bibles. **2 Chronicles 33** and Manasseh. What he Was good at. Was **making course corrections**. Noah was good at holding the course. Manasseh was good at making course corrections. Okay. Manasseh is a king of Judea. Of Judea. However you want to say it. Okay. Remember, Israel and Judah have. Have split. There's two kingdoms. He's king of Judah. His father was king of Judah, Hezekiah before him. Hezekiah was a good king. King. The Bible tells us in 2 Chronicles 29 that Hezekiah did right in the Lord's sight, just as his ancestor David had done. Now that's pretty good praise if somebody. If God would say, you did right just like David. I take that win and go home a happy man. Okay, so his father did a good job. He tore down the idols and the places where they worshiped that they would build in high places on top of hills. He tore all that down, got Israel back to worshiping God. And then we come along with Manasseh. So second Chronicles 33. Let's just start. We're going to read a few of the verses here real quick. We're going to skim through some of this.

Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king, and he reigned for 55 years in Jerusalem. 12 years old. 12 years old. I was eating dirt. I mean, I was 12 years old. I can't imagine being the most powerful person in the kingdom at 12 years old. Verse 2. He did what was evil in the Lord's sight, imitating the detestable practices of the nations that the Lord had disposed before the Israelites. He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had torn down and reestablished the altars for the Baals. He made the Asherah poles, and he bowed and worshiped all the stars in the sky, and he served them. He built altars in the Lord's temple where the Lord had said, Jerusalem is where my name will remain forever. Oh, my, oh my. And it goes on.

Verse 6. He passed his sons through fire in Ben Hinnom Valley. He practiced witchcraft, divination and sorcery. He consulted mediums and spiritists. He. He did a huge amount of evil in the Lord's sight, angering him. Manasseh set up a carved image of the idol which he had made in God's temple.

Okay, I don't know what you could do that would be worse than that. I mean, that's. We've gone straight to the bottom.

Okay, let's look ahead here. Verse 10. The Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but what they didn't Listen. So God comes along and says, hey, remember me? The God that put you here? The God that gave you this land? That's my temple. And they didn't listen. So he brought against them the military commanders of the King of Assyria. They captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon.

I don't know what being captured with hooks is, but. Ouch. Right? Ouch. That doesn't sound good, right?

So they take him to Babylon. When he was in distress, he sought the favor of the Lord, his God, and earnestly humbled himself before the God of his ancestors. He prayed to him, and the Lord was receptive of his prayer. He granted his request. He brought him back to Jerusalem, to his kingdom. And so Manasseh came to know that the Lord is God. Amen.

Wow. Now you think you've messed up because your little family of four or five or six or 25, however many your family is, and you've messed up there. He's messed up the whole kingdom. The whole kingdom. But it wasn't too late. It's never too late for God. There is no sin that cannot be forgiven by God.

And so fathers, mothers, if you feel like you've messed up, it's never too late. It's never too late. And it doesn't just apply to our children. Maybe you want to set an example in your extended family with cousins and uncles and aunts, whatever. Maybe it's your co workers, maybe it's your teammates on your softball team. It's never too late to start doing the right thing.

All right, number three. **Abraham and obedience**. Abraham and obedience. Oftentimes when we talk about Abraham, we talk about what? Faith, right? Abraham had great faith. And faith and obedience are related. They're not the same, but they go hand in hand. How do you have faith without obedience? Say, I have faith in God. And you know, God said, I'm supposed to do this, but I'm not going to do it. That's a weird faith, right? How do you obey without having faith in God? That becomes salvation by works that ends badly. We can't do that. So these things are very highly related, but they're not quite the same.

Two quick stories that we know. In **Genesis 12**, God tells Abraham to move. Abraham is 75 years old. Now, remember, this is our timeline. This is not back when people lived 600 years or whatever this is. He lives 120 years like us. He's 75 years old. And God says, move. You're going to say, I can't even get out of bed in the morning. You want me to move? God, my back hurts. Okay. God. Well, where do you want me to move to? Over there. I'll tell you when you get there. Can you imagine the discussion at the table that night when Abraham comes in and tells Sarah and whoever else is at the table, friends, family, whatever, hey, we're moving. We are? Yeah. Where to? That way. Well, where that way? God will tell us when we get there. This just goes against everything in my soul because I'm a planner and I can't imagine telling my wife and family we're moving. Where? East. Can't go very far west here. East. Well, where? East? East. Well, where are we going to live? I don't know. What jobs are we going to do? Don't know that either. Do you have a house? Nope. Right. Oofta. There's just no way. And this doesn't just happen at Abraham's table because this happens at the

table of all the people that work for him. All the hired hands, all the ranchers, all the shepherds, people are going, what about the kids? You have to go to a new school, right? But they pick up and they move and they go. Because God is obedient. I mean, because Abraham is obedient to God's voice, right?

A little bit later, there's kind of a similar story in **Genesis 22**, when God tells Abraham, take your son, your only son who you love, Isaac, and go to the region of Marah and sacrifice. And there's a burnt offering on a mountain. I will show you again. I don't even. Just go to this region and I'll tell you what mountain to go to again, Lord, really. And you know, you know, we waited 100 years for this kid. I don't have a hundred more years. Right? And not only is Abraham obedient, but his son is obedient. Now, he's a teenager. How easy is it for him to walk away from Abraham? He doesn't even have to resist. He just kind of walk away. Can't keep up with me, right? Abraham's old. He's 117, 120 something. He's old, Isaac. Just walk away, Like keep away. Right? But they are both obedient to God. Of course we know that God spares Isaac and provides an offering, a lamb for the offering.

But what do we learn from this? God is going to ask you to do things. Most of us won't get asked to do something as hard as Noah or Abraham. But God's going to ask you to do things. Maybe it's going to be something simple. Maybe God wants you to volunteer at church or some charity or to give back to the community in some way. Or God wants you to tell your neighbor about Jesus. I don't know what it is. You know what it is because you've been listening and you've been hearing that voice. And some of us have been resisting because it's scary and it is. I think Abraham was scared both times. It's okay to be scared. It's not okay to be disobedient. And I'd rather have somebody who's scared and obedient, okay?

And so we have people over us that we have to listen to. We have bosses. If you go to school, we have teachers. If you're a guy, you have a wife. We all have people over us. Tell us what to do. Just kidding, ladies. Little joke for Father's Day. No pitchforks, okay? We all have people over us that us what to do. Maybe it's the government, maybe it's the state. Maybe it's whoever. Are you obedient to what they're asking you to do? As long as it's not a violation of God's law.

How would your life be different if people knew you were going to obey God and obey man as best you could? I think the world would be a lot different place.

And the last one, **Jesus** and **love**. Read the any of the **four gospels** you pick, right? And Jesus is not even a biological father, but in John 14:7, he says, if you really know me, you will know my Father as well. So we learn about our Heavenly Father through Jesus. Amen. Okay, so we're stretching a little bit, but, you know, we learn a lot about Jesus and God and their

characteristics and their mercy and the grace and the forgiveness and the love. These are all, all wonderful things. But the love is what I want to concentrate on. Because when you have love, the other ones are a lot easier. See, it's hard for me to forgive somebody if I don't love them. Because, you know, if Gustavo comes up and does something and I don't like Gustavo, and he says, well, forgive me, like, no. Right. That hurt. Don't do that to me again. But if you love Gustavo and then you say, yeah, okay, it's all right, right? So we have to be careful about that.

And sometimes we throw all that love away in a moment of frustration or anger as we get into a little dispute with our spouse or our kids. Be careful not to do that as best you can. Stop Take a moment. Remember that God loves them and God loves you and that you love them. I saw a little cartoon, was an elderly couple who apparently had been having a discussion because they had those little smoky lines coming up like they were angry from their heads. They're sitting at opposite ends of a park bench and it's pouring rain and the man is holding an umbrella over her head. I'm angry at you, but I still love you. So remember that.

And some of us struggle on Father's Day because we had less than an ideal relationship with our father. Maybe no relationship at all. I don't know. And you know, we want to say we feel that if you feel that way, and I understand there can be pain and there can be difficulties in our earthly relationships, but Jesus has modeled a better path for us, better path to follow. And it's never too late to start. There's never a point when you say it can't be fixed because God is always there for us.

So there's a few ideas. Have a strong moral compass. Make course corrections. Work on the obedience and the love.

Reflection. How do you think you're doing as a father or a parent or in your relationships? Are there things that could be better?

By the way, the answer to that last question is yes. None of us are perfect, right? I know some of us dads, tomorrow we're going to get the cup that says #1 dad. But you're still not perfect.

Challenge. Pick one of these four attributes and work on that. And after a while, switch to the next one. Be active in your desire to improve.

What if Manasseh had said, woe is me. I've been caught by hooks and bound up. There's nothing I can do? No. He was active in his desire to change. You can be, too.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you so much for the fathers that you have given us. And while sometimes things haven't been great, Lord, we're still thankful for our fathers. We're

thankful for the example you set. And while things can go off the trail or off the tracks here, we know with you all things are good. We know it's never too late to start building the relationship again, Lord. We know it's never too late to start behaving in a way that would be in line with you, Lord. We just ask our fathers, give them wisdom. They face a lot of difficulties every day, how to lead, how to spiritually lead, how to provide for the family. Give them wisdom. Give them strength, Lord. And be with our mothers too, because we're kind of fond of them as well. Lord, we're just so grateful for the things that you do for us. And too often we don't say thank you. So today, Lord, thank you for our Dads. Be with us now and bring us back in Jesus name, amen.