

Leading Like Your Heavenly Father  
1 Thess 2:10-12

I was in the S. Vineland Post Office Yesterday. The postal clerks were happy. Everyone smiling. Lot's of small talk. Tomorrow is FATHER'S DAY, and as far as the POST OFFICE GOES, it's just another day! NOTHING at all like MOTHER'S DAY! I said to postal clerks behind the counter, "I'll give up Father's Day if you ladies will give up Mother's Day!" All the men were ready to go. The lady said "NO WAY!"

And so it is with Father's Day. It almost seem's that someone started Father's Day just to be fair, but really, Mother's Day gets all of the attention!

In spite of how affectionate we are toward our mothers.

In spite of the fact that given six seconds on national TV, 99% will say "hi Mom!"

In spite of the tremendous importance and significance mothers have in the spiritual lives of their children.

In spite of the fact that for many homes, mom is the defacto spiritual leader...

**The greatest human factor in determining whether children live for God is made by the child's father.**

We know this because:

- God established the home and gave Fathers spiritual responsibility
- God warns fathers about the implication of their sins. Exodus 34:7 *"maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."*
- Father's are commanded to raise their children. Ephesians 6:4 *Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*

A recent study confirmed the importance of a father's influence on his children's faith.

*"Neither maltreatment from mothers nor from outside the family has an effect on religiosity, but abuse committed by fathers is related to decreases in religiosity, and abuse from outside the immediate family is related to increases in self-ratings of spirituality."* Bierman, Alex. "Reconciling Conflicting Theories of the Effects of Childhood Maltreatment on Adult Religiosity and Spirituality: Rejecting God the Father Because of Abusive Fathers." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 44.3 (2005): 349-360. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. Web. 19 June 2010.

**I. How are father's to lead?**

**Let's look at 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12**

A. In Paul's **testimony** among the Thessalonians, he gives THREE

DESCRIPTIONS of his conduct among them.

1. “**men** approved by God” (2:4)
2. “like a **mother** caring for her children” (2:7)
3. “as a **father** deals with his own children” (2:10)., **We want to focus our attention on this third description.**

The entire passage reads:

*“You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. 11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, 12 encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.”* (1 Thessalonians 2:10–12, NIV)

- a. Note that the words “deals with” (NIV) are not in original.
- b. The NIV is correct, but the meaning is implied.
- c. A more accurate translation is given in the ESV. *“For you know how, **like a father with his children**, we **exhorted** each one of you and **encouraged** you and **charged** you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.* (1 Thessalonians 2:11–12, ESV)
- d. Both translations point to three key ingredients of a loving father

## B. **Three Qualities of a Loving Father**

Paul is describing his LOVE for the Thessalonians

He uses a description that we can all understand

1. ENCOURAGING. παρακαλέω.
  - a. Often used of the Holy Spirit
  - b. “Someone who comes to the side of someone to help”
  - c. When used to refer to encouragement, there is often a connection to our **WORDS**. 1 Corinthians 14:31 *For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged* (parakaleo).
  - d. One of the qualities of a godly father is ENCOURAGEMENT.
  - e. *Illus - “Fathering Like the Father” Kenneth Gangel and his son Jeffery tell a story about **David Simmons**, a former corner back for the Dallas Cowboys. His father was a military man and was extremely demanding, rarely saying a kind word, always pushing him with harsh criticism to do*

*better. The father had decided that he would never permit his son to feel any satisfaction from his accomplishments, reminding him that there were always new goals ahead. When Dave was a little boy, his dad gave him a bicycle, unassembled, with the command that he put it together. After Dave struggled to the point of tears with the difficult instructions and many parts, his father said, "I knew you couldn't do it." Then he assembled it for him. When Dave played football in high school, his father was unrelenting in his criticism. In the backyard of his home, after every game, his dad would go over every play and point out Dave's errors. "Most boys got butterflies in the stomach before the game, I got them afterwards. Facing my father was more stressful than facing any opposing team." (Gangel and Gangel, "Fathering like the Father, 30-31).*

- f. *Illus - video taping basketball games. It helped me not to be critical.*
- g. Encouragement does **not mean approval of sin!**
- h. Encouragement does **not mean removing all consequences!**
- i. It means recognizing that the child is growing and needs to learn from their mistakes.
- j. Some day, your child may encourage you! Wednesday, at Seminary. David was on business in Scranton, close to Clarks Summit. Met me for lunch. He picked me up, and we drove to a nearby restaurant. We talked. He told me about his worship team, the things that he and his pastor are talking about. We talked about being a parent. He paid the bill and got me back in time for class. **On Thursday, he called... "Dad, how funny was that! I drove up to Clarks Summit. Picked you up for lunch. Drove us to a restaurant. Paid the bill, and got you back to school in time for your next class!"**

2. COMFORTING. παραμυθέομαι

- a. Used only 4x in NT
  - (1) In John 11:19, 31 *and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to **comfort them** in the loss of their brother.*
  - (2) in 1 Thess 5:14 "*encourage the timid*"
- b. To console or comfort "Esp. in connection w. death or other tragic events" (BAGD)

- c. “consolation for Alexander when he was depressed” (BAGD)
  - d. Dad’s you are needed!
    - (1) **Needed to LEAD.** Joshua 24:15 *But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.*”
    - (2) **Needed to PROVIDE.** Luke 11:11–13 *“Which of you eye fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”*
    - (3) **Needed to DISCIPLINE.** Proverbs 3:11–12 *My son, do not despise the LORD’s discipline and do not resent his rebuke, 12 because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.*
  - e. How do you comfort? **Three ways to communicate love to your kids**
    - (1) eye contact
    - (2) physical contact
    - (3) focused attention (Ron Rand, “For Father’s Who Aren’t In Heaven,” 82)
3. URGING. μαρτυρόμενοι
- a. “To testify”
  - b. To urge, implore.
  - c. Ephesians 4:17 *So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.*
  - d. Urging to do what?
  - e. **To live lives worthy of God!!!**
  - f. This is spiritual leadership!
  - g. This is what great fathers are like!

1 John 2:14 *I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives*

*in you, and you have overcome the evil one.*

*John 1:18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.*

The only way to **lead like your Heavenly Father** is to **KNOW your heavenly father.**