

Identity Wars Series

No. 3 – The Glory of Children

What we want to do this afternoon is to expand the concept of the blessing. The key part of us being able to break the cycle of the pride, depression—was that blessing, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I'm well pleased." And that's the part that I want to amplify and pull apart. As we do this, I want to remind you of the two kingdoms. In God's kingdom, we get value only from our relationship with our Father in heaven. In Satan's kingdom, we get value from other things. And that will play a crucial role as we look at this particular subject and the roles that we play in our home environments.

Let's just bow our heads and we'll pray.

Father in heaven, we just thank You so much that we can talk to You; that because of Christ, I can speak without phones, without any of those things, and know that You are listening, that You are actually leaning forward on Your throne longing to hear the voice of Your son. And Lord, I ask You to give me the words to speak for I have nothing to say. And I pray that You would help each one of us here this afternoon to know how much You love each one of us and how Your kingdom really is a family kingdom, and how that our families represent that kingdom. And we thank You in Jesus' Name. Amen.

I have memories of when I was much younger. Rosemary was talking about when she was in Warburton, where I spent from age two to seven in Warburton. And the first part of that, of course, I don't remember. But I have these pictures in my mind, pictures that my parents took when I was a small baby. And those pictures have a profound impact on the sense of who I am. We are, each of us, should I say, we have different rooms in our mind with different pictures, memories, and experiences. Some of those rooms, we go into and we like to sit there and remember and reflect and enjoy. Other rooms, we don't want to go in there because of the pain and the sorrow and the terrible experiences we've had there. I have a room where there are a few pictures. And here is a picture that I want to show to you.

That's me. Three weeks of age. See? I don't get value out of hiding these things from you, see? And that's my father. That picture is in a very sacred part of my mind because I remember as a small boy looking at that picture, not realizing its significance to me, that there is my father, he's looking at me. He's holding me in his arms. There is so much power in that picture. So much more power than I ever realized. That picture says to me that I'm important. I'm special to the one that brought me into this world. A beautiful picture. I have other pictures in my mind. I've obviously lost weight since then.

That was in Warburton. Not far from the hospital. And again that picture is important to me because I can see in my father's face, "This is my son." He's holding on to me. And even now, it's something very special to look at, to know that I was important to my father. I have other pictures of my father—memories, rooms that I'd like to go into from time to time and to remember. My mother told me that after I was born, that my father, when he found out that it was a boy, this was in Warburton Hospital, he went running through the hospital, singing at the top of his lungs, "It's a boy! It's a boy! I've got a boy!" And looking back now, I didn't realize how important that was for me to know that, to know that my father wanted me, that he cared for me, and that he wasn't worried about looking like an idiot running through the hospital. He didn't care about what other people thought. He had a boy. "If you don't like it, that's your problem. I have a son. And he's my son." And that's another beautiful picture that I have had given to me.

I have another story—another picture. And I couldn't quite find this picture. But it's a picture of when we were visiting at the Manly Flats and Dad was pretending to be a horse. He's down on his knees and

I was on his back and running along and the big grin on my face. Very, very important picture to be able to play with my dad.

Another story that I do remember vaguely. I remember going across to the neighbour's house. And the neighbour was chopping wood preparing for winter. This was early '70s. He's chopping the wood getting ready for winter and I stand there and I'm looking at him chopping the wood and I piped up and I said to him as he was chopping, "My dad can chop wood better than you can. My dad can do anything."

Powerful statement. The picture of my father and what he meant to me. I didn't know that later on, that same man used me as a sermon illustration of child-like faith and how that my dad was better than anybody. And that's just the way it was.

I remember my dad would go running early in the morning before he got to work. He worked at the hospital and he had to be there at six o'clock in the morning and sometimes he'd go early and I'd say, "Dad, I want to come with you some time." And we'd go down to the oval early in the morning and running. And then Dad had big legs and he could run fast. I'm trying to keep up with him but he was so strong. I just thought, "My dad's so strong. My dad's so powerful. My dad can do anything."

Such memories have a profound impact on later life. The more and more I look back now, the more and more I realize that I had a father that was one-in-a-million. Or more than that. There are some aspects that my father did not have and I guess I focused on those things within my teenage years. But I didn't focus on the things that my dad did have. And I'm starting to try and do that now.

I have deep pictures impressed upon my mind from my teenage years. I remember once, we're travelling from Sydney to Brisbane and we were in Coffs Harbour. We stopped at an ice cream shop and we had some ice cream together. We get in the car. We travel seven or eight kilometres up the road. My dad suddenly twigs that the shop assistant has overpaid him two dollars. What would most people do? Ah well, my dad turns the car around. He drives the seven kilometres back. He goes up to the shop assistant and says, "You overpaid me two dollars. Here's the change." My father could have spent millions of hours explaining to me the importance of honesty. But in that one moment, he impressed upon my mind —honesty, at any cost. Any cost.

Cost us money. Cost us time. We were on our trip from Sydney to Brisbane. It took time out of our schedule. He drove all the way back. And it had an impact on my mind.

I remember Dad working on difficult projects, things at home that he was wrestling with and struggling with and sometimes he gets really frustrated and was trying to do home improvements or something at home —I can't remember exactly what it was —but I remember my father would never give up. He would never give up. And that's something that's stayed with me. I can't say I have always been as good as he has on that particular one but determination —determination. He wouldn't let something beat him. In other sense, the thing that I learned from my father is that —and I don't recommend you do this—it's a good recipe for getting very angry —he used to regularly watch the current affairs programs and all the injustices and all the bad things that are happening in the world. And my dad would sit there and say, "These rotten people are letting —getting away with these things! They should be brought to justice!" Those programs are designed to do that, to get you all worked up and things like that.

But I remember thinking about listening to my father, the way he would speak about injustice and the need to have things done right, and all these sorts of things.

Dad was also funny. He would make me laugh. Just cracking jokes and having fun together.

It's something that I didn't realize at that time but never once did I ever receive any indication at the time that I lived at home that my father, in any way, responded to temptation from a woman or women outside of our home. And I look back at that and I'm so thankful. I'm so thankful. Never once gave any indication that that was the case. And I realize what a blessing it has been to have a father like my father. And it reminds me of a verse in Scripture which I've been blessed a lot by lately, as I've thought about this particular verse.

Proverbs 17:6. "Children's children are the crown of old men and the glory of children is their father."

There's deep significant truth in this verse which our society is fast moving away from. "The glory of children is their father." What does the word 'glory' mean? Let's unpack this word. Glory is the active word. That's the thing. The glory of children. Let's unpack this word. If you look in Jeremiah 9:23 and 24, it uses this word 'glory.' God says this. And these two verses here are very much part of the 'Satan's kingdom/God's kingdom.' Where do you get your value?

Jeremiah 9:23. "Thus says the Lord: 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things, I delight.' says the Lord."

Glory. "Let not the wise man glory in his riches." Let's insert a different meaning to that word. The word 'glory' means beauty, splendor, jewels, to boast, something from which you find value. And we've been talking a lot about finding value in our presentations. So if we put the words to find value in this verse, we'll find that it fits very neatly. "Thus says the Lord, "Let not the wise man find value in his wisdom. Let not the mighty man find value in his might. Nor let the rich man find value in his riches. But let him who finds value find value in this: That he understands and knows Me."

Very clear distinction of the two kingdoms. So if we bring that meaning —find value into this verse, the glory or value of children is their father. The glory or the value. The value of children. That which gives them a sense of value, a sense of purpose, a sense of destiny —is directly connected to the father.

You can read all kinds of psychological studies and materials that indicate the crucial role of a father in the life of a child. That's very, very important at this point that we understand the two kingdoms. By pointing out this here, the glory or value of the children is the father, immediately, some may be tempted to suggest, well, "What about the mother?" Well, we're going to unpack this. We're going to look at this.

The Bible says, "The glory of children is their father." If you break or diminish the child's connection to their father, you break or diminish their value. And do we see movements from within our society to get the father out of the home environment or to encourage him to leave or to make him irresponsible so that he doesn't see the necessity or the importance of looking after the family and doing what needs to be done in the home? We see this in many places happening today.

It's interesting to note that in the Hebrew language, the very first word in the alphabet, in [inaudible – straungst? 15:37], Number One, the very first word is 'father.' Is that a coincidence? 'Abba.' 'Ab.' Hebrew for father. I don't think it's a coincidence at all.

And again as we listen to these things, if you attempt and just start to find value in your gender, you're in great trouble. This is not representing God's kingdom. Remember, the value system of God where it says, "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than

many sparrows." (Luke 12:6,7) The representation of the father to his children is a symbol or a reflection of God's love for us as His children. It's a special role that God has given to represent God in this capacity.

And again we looked at this verse last night. "Many, O Lord, my God, are Your wonderful works which You have done; and Your thoughts towards us cannot be recounted to You in order; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." (Psalms 40:5) Again, a reflection of God's incredible love for us.

I just want to share with you some thoughts that represent this. I went to a website called imissmydad.com. And there are some beautiful statements there of people who are writing to their fathers who've passed away. And they just want to write something to their dad. And I want you to pick up on this particular point.

This is from Noelle who lives in Ireland. Says, "Dear Daddy, today I am 30 and you are not here. No hug, no kiss, no birthday wish this year. No smile, no eyebrow raised, no singing me a song. I can't believe the time has passed. I can't believe you're gone. I love you. Always have. Always will."

I'm sure just listening to that, that for each us, a stirring begins to take place as we think about the impact of those words, of things that are most precious to us, the things that are most important to us.

Let me read another one. This is Paul from the U.S.A. "Dad, I miss you everyday and just wish we could talk again. Losing you has made me question who I am and where I'm going." We see the sense of destiny, sense of purpose and identity connected to the role of a father. "Can I be the Dad you were? You were the best. I just wish you could have lived longer to see my accomplishments." When you accomplish things in life, when there aren't important people in your life blessing them, they're not really worth much. "And share in that joy. Even a year later I find myself wanting to pick up the phone to call you. I love you."

A few more if you can take it. "Dad, it was quiet on Thanksgiving today not having you around. I felt an emptiness in me and I know everyone else felt the same."

And these are just a few of thousands of people writing. imissmydad.com.

This is the one that really, really hits hard. She just signed it, "Daddy's Princess." "Hi, Daddy! I hope you're proud of me. I'm really happy and things are going well in life. Work is a little overwhelming but I guess that's what I signed up for. I think I'm doing all the right things and I hope you approve. 'Miss you. 'Love you always. Princess."

It's hard to read things like that without getting a little bit emotional. But it's because we're starting to tap into the very heart of what God's kingdom is all about. The relationships. The intimate close relationships. The family relationships that God has established. And we need to realize that when this young lady expresses this, something as beautiful as this, remember what we said before, the human heart in and of itself does not have the capacity to write and do this. We don't. The **carnal mind** is enmity against God. We don't have the capacity to love. We don't have the capacity to care for anything other than our own enjoyment and pleasure. When someone writes like this, it is because the Spirit of God is in them.

They are responding to Christ. Yearning. God has allowed us through our family environment to feel the yearning that God has for us. And He hopes that we will have for Him. And that's something that's really, really important.

"These notes reveal the yearning hearts' desire of humanity for its creator." When you feel a desire for your father, you're really actually desiring your Heavenly Father. That's what you're desiring. That's

what that yearning is for. So for some of us that haven't had a good father, the fact is Psalms tells us, Psalms 27:10, "When my mother and my father forsake me, the Lord will take me up." He will take care of me. And the father was only ever intended, well, one of the main things the father was intended for was that he represent the yearning of the human heart for God.

So every time we feel that desire for our earthly father, it's really a desire for God. That's who we're desiring. Deep down. It's expressed through our earthly father and it's a blessing to have an earthly father who loves us and cares for us and takes care of us. But he is only a reflection or a symbol of what God wants for us. But of course it's a very important symbol. And if that symbol is taken away, the symbol is shattered. It's pulled apart.

These are some of the words that God would say to us in Scripture. His yearning for us in response to our yearning for Him.

"Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.'" (Jeremiah 1:4, 5)

To be thought of as known before you were even created. God knew you. He thought about you. He planned you. You were a sparkle in your Father's eye from before time began. That's a hard concept to grasp but it has immense power. Immense power.

"The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: 'Yes, I've loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you.'" (Jeremiah 31:3) One of the ways He draws us is through our earthly relationships. Through our parents. Through those that we are connected with. And God here is reaching out for us. How could so many of us get God so wrong? So misunderstanding what He's like and how He operates. It's a constant mystery. It's part of that drunkenness of being in the wrong kingdom, that we see God as exacting and controlling and trying to restrict anything that is fun for us. It certainly appears that way when you were younger.

So we want to move on to the roles of a father and mother. We look at two different roles. The roles of father and mother are vitally under attack today. They are really being attacked by our society in every way. If you watch any television for any extended period of time, your perception of what it means to be a mother or father, husband and wife is being attacked. It is being shredded. And if what God designed for the human family in terms of husband and wife, mother and father is obscured, then we're in great trouble. Remember, God's kingdom is a family-based kingdom.

If you turn to Ephesians Chapter 3, I don't think I've got that listed. Ephesians 3:14, 15. "For this reason, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." We're all part of one family. We need to understand that. And any time we want to represent God's kingdom on earth, it has to be done through family. As I said this morning, the success of the church depends upon the success of the family. Church is built on families and the right perception of families. And anything that comes in that destroys the concept of what it means to be husband and wife in a biblical sense will destroy the concept of God's kingdom. And these are challenging thoughts.

When you look at the way Jesus prayed, when the disciples came to Him and said, "How should we pray?" He doesn't say to the disciples, "Your hallowed majesty." He doesn't say, "Bow six times and then go through a rosary bead and then, "Dear King." No. He says, "Our Father." That's your first point of reference. Our Father. When you pray, say, "Our Father." What a wonderful, wonderful thing. Our Father.

Twenty-six times in the gospels, Jesus tells us that God is our Father. Sixty-one times, Jesus calls God, "My Father." It's a recurrent theme through Scripture. "My Father. My Father." And that's why the importance of the statement, "This is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased." If your father is

important to you, then when he makes a statement, it has power. If your father is insignificant, when he says something, it's not really important. And can it be, can it be that through our rebellious nature growing up and not appreciating the roles of a father, or a mother for that matter, that as we grow up, when our true Father sends us His Word, we don't really understand its power? Does that make sense? It doesn't mean that much because we're more focused on what we want to do rather than what our Father is saying to us.

Okay. As I've got here. God has laid down guidelines for, I guess we're moving now from identity, personally, child of God, to identity within the family. Different roles for husband and wife because there are different things that need to be achieved from both mother and father in the home environment to bring up a child that is well-balanced and well-rounded.

The Bible in Genesis 3:16, what does Genesis 3:16 say? Now, we're really going to test on which kingdom influences your thinking. Genesis 3:16. Where do you get your value? Genesis 3:16. "To the woman He said, 'I'll greatly multiply your sorrow in your conception, in pain shall you bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you.'" Now, when I hear that verse, with the upbringing that I've had and experience and I have, I have immediate aversion to that verse. So I'm like, "Oh! That's male chauvinism. Husband ruling over the wife?" Anyone else feeling the same thing?

Rulership. How you understand rulership depends on which kingdom you're living out of. Satan's kingdom, performance-based kingdom, means position is power, position is value. Which means that to interpret that verse as ruler, as "I'm the one with the power. I'm the one that controls. I'm the one that determines." If that's how you're reading it, you're in the wrong kingdom. But if you're reading it from a relationship position where positions are given to bless and to enhance relationships, then you're reading it in the right sense. And I find it hard as I read these passages, because of the training that I've had in the performance-based system that I've had and the drunkenness of experience in the spiritual realm on this issue, I find it hard to interpret these verses correctly. I don't even like to preach about them because I'm not, I don't want to get my suit messed up from throwing eggs and tomatoes at me, and stuff like that. I want to keep my suit clean.

"He shall rule over you." Rulership. 1 Corinthians 11:3, it says that "The husband is the head of the wife." The head of the wife. Ephesians 5:23 says the same thing. 1 Timothy 3:1-4 talks about qualifications of an elder in terms of ruling his household well. In 1 Peter 3:1-7, he's described as the leader. Why does the Bible talk like this? Is this all culturally-conditioned stuff? Is that what it is? I don't think so. I don't think so.

Let's have a look at this quote from 'Adventist Home' page 212. "All members of the family center in the father. He is the lawmaker..." I'm resisting my urge to feel, "Oh, this is bad. It's going to go bad." "... Illustrating in his own manly bearing the sterner virtues: energy, integrity, honesty, patience, courage, diligence, and practical usefulness. The father is in one sense the priest of the household, laying upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice."

Responsibility. If I can word it this way, most young men today, because of our society, don't actually understand what it means to be a man. Most of them don't have a male role model that they can follow, that is a real man. The men that we have portrayed to us today are men that are irresponsible, playing around, let the wife look after all the kids in the home and "I'll just muck up, play around, do whatever." Because he's never actually been taught what it is to be a man. You watch Simpsons, you watch all kinds of other programs, and they give you a very clear picture of what people think of the father: he's just an idiot. He's just a dope. He doesn't have a clue of what's going on. He's behind the times. He's losing his hair. He's losing his marbles. He's losing everything.

That's what the world would portray to us. But the Bible tells us that God has given a special blessing to come through the role of a father. The most important thing that the father will do in his life is to

impart to the next generation a sense of worth, a sense of resilience, a sense of "You are important; you are special." There's no higher calling in this for a man in his life, in his culture, in his society, in his home, in his church. Your job, your work, everything else pales into insignificance compared to this one role. If only men could understand that they have a power to bless the children. The next generation look to their father for guidance, for identity. They model themselves. They need approval. As we read in those statements before, "Daddy, I hope that you approve. I need to hear these words from you. 'You're doing good. What you're doing is wonderful. I'm really happy about what you're doing.'" We need to hear these words because that's how God's kingdom operates.

And when you turn around and you make the role of the father insignificant, you make it appear that what he has to say is stupid, idiotic, and not worth anything, then you have cut off his ability to bless. So that when he says, "I love you," "Ah, yes, whatever. I don't care what you have to say. You're not important to me." And now the child who normally would look for the blessing from the father now looks for it somewhere else, looks for it in the arms of some other young man, young lady. Job. Some performance-based thing. Because the father's irrelevant now. He has no role. And men who have no role have no importance or significance in life. And again, I like to talk about my good friends down at Centrelink.

Centrelink has really destroyed many aspects of the role of the husband as provider for his family. We don't need men. What do you need them for? Just go to Centrelink. Now I'm not saying that it doesn't help people in certain situations. But one of the consequences of having this system is that the men feel irrelevant. We don't need them anymore. They have no role to play. "Just as long as I get the baby, I don't need you. Just leave." Obviously not everyone feels that way. But this is in society, some of the things that are starting to take place. We need to recapture the biblical model so that we can bless our children. You need to understand the cycle of pride and depression. I wish I had time to explain this. And all I can say is that it's on the CDs which we'll make available later—is that after a number of years of being at school and constantly being compared with your peers on a multiple number of labels, by the time you get to the early teenage years, your sense of self-worth is starting to unravel and fall apart. And your perception of what it means to be valuable and important has completely shifted. It's at that time that often the father has often left home or just become irrelevant. At the time that children need their father the most, he's out of the picture. And the child is destined to struggle through life trying to find who they are and why they are in any other means than the way God has ordained it.

And so in God's kingdom, all members of the family centering in the father means that he has the ability to bless and to create value, or allows God to say to the children that He loves them. It's a role specifically-designated for that purpose, to allow God to say, "This is how I love you." He does the same thing through the mother but in a different way. In a different way. We need to look at some of those things.

The mother. Genesis 2:18. I wish we had time to unpack this whole segment. But time does not permit. Genesis 2:18 presents helper, the role of a helper. And we get all kinds of interesting scenarios on this verse. So I heard someone the other day saying, "Your husband," and in Genesis 3:16, "Your desire will be toward your husband and he shall rule over you." That particular verse is only just describing what's happening because of sin. It's not a prescription for the way it has to be. So it's just going to be that way because of sin. And I'm looking at that verse and I'm going, "Your desire shall be toward your husband." Okay. So we can thank sin for the fact that women want to have an intimate relationship with the men. We can thank sin for that. That's good. That's really good. No, this is the way God set it up to ensure that His blessing could continue to pass through the roles because let's remember, always, value does not come by position. It only comes through relationships. So that when this occurs, you can have people in differing positions and not worrying about it in the slightest. Did the cherubim get really "narked" and annoyed with God because the seraphims had six wings and they only had four? Did they really get annoyed about that? And what are you going to do when you get to heaven and the 144,000 of the closest to God and you only make it into the martyr class? You're

in the second ring out there and what about the great multitude? Well, you're just a bunch of plebs. Are we going to live like that in heaven? Role has nothing to do with your value.

What did David say? "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." It has nothing to do with it. And if we can just stop being so drunk on this issue we might actually get somewhere with presenting the third angel's message to the world.

"Desire towards the husband." Genesis 3:16. The beautiful thing about this verse here. It says, "The woman's desire will be toward her husband." Do you know that when it comes to verbal communication, we all recognize that women have a better ability at expressing their feelings than men do. We know that. Anyone not know that? You're in denial. And that's because women use both sides of their brain for verbal communication. Men only use one side of their brain. Don't get value out of that. And surveys have shown that on average per day, women will speak, use about 25,000 words per day on average. Men use about 12,000. We all knew that, too. That's only as a general rule. But what that says is that the desire for communication, a young man or a young woman growing up will learn more from their mother about communication, the importance to express feeling, to express thoughts, to desire to understand. Often, at the end of the day, when I've finished work and I come home and it's late and we're lying down going to bed, my wife hasn't seen me all day. We're both really tired. And then she just gets this energy from somewhere. And she just starts talking and talking and "How is this and this...?" She wants to communicate. She wants to know what's in my heart and she wants to see what's in her heart. And I need to learn from her in that capacity. I need to learn.

Now, if a young man can learn this from his mother, he can save the future wife he will marry a lot of frustration in trying to get this point across to him. "I want to communicate with you. I want to understand what's in your head and I want to tell you what's in my head. And I want to share." If you learned it from your mother, you're going to save your wife a lot of headbanging experiences. "He doesn't get it. I just want to sit and talk." And men just want to solve problems this way. Solve problems. And this is vitally-important. The desire for intimacy, the desire for communication, is a gift and a blessing that a wife and a mother can pass on to the next generation and teach the next generation. So combining your sense of destiny and purpose and blessing that comes from the father, with the need for, or the blessing of intimacy and the desire for communication, you put those two together, you've got a complete person. Both mother and father play critical roles in developing the next generation. If you scramble those roles, you pull it apart, you pull the whole thing apart, you misrepresent God's kingdom. And the more we begin to understand why God has established the family the way that He has, the less drunk we're going to get on Satan's kingdom.

I spent a bit more time on this particular issue. Spirit of prophecy very clearly says that reflecting this role that the husband is the head of the house, not as a performance issue but as a blessing issue, as imparting the blessing. Why does it say in 1 Peter chapter 3 that Sarah called Abraham, "Lord?" My Western culture upbringing, Greek philosophy mindset says, "Ugh, that's blasphemous to even think that way!" But that's because of the performance-based kingdom. She called her husband, "Lord." She had a level of respect for her husband because she knew that as she respected her husband, her children then would respect her husband. They would follow her lead and then they would respect her as well. And that she would be securing a blessing for her children, to the next generation. She understood the principle. There is nothing to be lost in referring to her husband in this way. She didn't lose anything by doing that. She understood the principle that the glory of children is their father and that she could work on her role to impart communication and the desire for intimacy and the need to express your feelings. And the two together were a blessing.

Now, obviously, it gets difficult when you get into a situation where a man does not take up his responsibilities. Many women are placed in very difficult situations because men are really still boys. Irresponsible. Let their wife deal with it. Nothing worse for a woman than to be married to a boy. That's hell. Very difficult. And I can understand why many women want to rise up and fix the situation. We can't blame them for that. But it's going to bring a curse in the end. We have to ask God.

God, He's the head." So you go past your head, you go to his boss and say, "Lord, we got a problem here. Can you help my husband? He needs to understand?" It's not easy. Human relationships are never easy. It's never cut and dried. But we need to maintain these roles that God has given to us.

Reading again. "God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided 'a help meet for him' - a helper corresponding to him - one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him." (PP 46)

I heard someone the other day. This is the problem when you get locked into Satan's kingdom of performance I heard someone saying the other day. "The word 'helper' means, well, God has referred to as helper. And it's actually a position of superiority." Give me a break! Can't you stop being so drunk? Can't you see the issue? It's not the issue. You don't get value out of your gender. It's just not what God is on about. But when you're in Satan's kingdom, oh, yes, gender is very important. Very, very important. 'Helper' means one who works alongside, one who you can share everything with, to support and encourage one another. That's what the Bible would tell us. But you can only see that when you see God's relationship-based kingdom. And we're having a little wrestle with this issue in our church. Really big wrestle. This issue. In terms of leadership roles and positions and things that are often so prevalent in church because the church is reflection of the family. And one is the reflection of the other. And we need to re-do some thinking on this particular issue and lose the value issue on roles.

I like this verse. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:27, 28) What that is saying is let not man or woman glory or find value in their gender. That's what that verse is saying. Some people use this verse to completely twist it and make it into something else. So we can do anything and go in place or any role. That's not what it's saying. It's saying don't find value in those things. It talks about race. It talks about jobs. Slave or free. It talks about gender. They're the three things. Don't find value in those things. No barrier, no position, no separation between those things. That's what that verse is trying to say to us.

All right. Family Roles Under Attack.

I'll read you some of these statements.

Capitalism is challenging the simple truth that a child's relation with his or her biological father is valuable. The image of fathers has come under increasing attack as more TV sitcoms feature fathers as incompetents ("The Simpsons" and "King of Queens", whatever it is I don't know what that is, are current examples) and movie plots involve abusive fathers ("The Breakfast Club," "Affliction," and "Daredevil" to name only a few). Many courageous women have long been forced by circumstances to raise their children alone. Now, however, as celebrities like Camryn Manheim (Eleanor of TV's hit lawyer show, "The Practice") choose to have and raise babies without a father (both in real life and her fictional character, in the case of Manheim), Hollywood sends the message, "Who needs a father?" Academics deride fatherhood in books like, 'Feminism,' 'Children,' and 'The New Families,' in which Susan E. Krantz dismisses the notion that "two parents are necessary for the well-being of a child" and argues that "the role of the father has been overemphasized."

Can you hear the voice of the serpent? Because he knows. Try and understand, Satan has a big plan. A big program. That is, cause a child to be cursed. Take the father out of the situation. Break the family up. Give that child a sense of worthlessness. "Then I can control him." Because when you're worthless, when you're not worth anything, who cares? Who cares whether you live or die? Who cares whether you smoke, drink, sleep around, do whatever? Who cares? "I'm not worth anything

anyway." I see many stickers on the back of cars. "Care Factor - Zero Percent." It's pretty bad when you get to that point.

I remember my father when he used to drive buses as well. And this kid was smoking, just before he was hopping on the bus. And my father said to him, "You know, you'll kill yourself if you smoke." He said, "Who cares? We're all going to die anyway."

You can't discipline a child that doesn't care about themselves. Ever tried it? Tried to do it with a child that doesn't have respect for themselves or for anybody else? You can't reason with them. You can't discipline them. You can't do anything. They're just on a path to self-destruction. And you can't stop it.

And this is what comes about when we pull apart the family roles that God has given us. We need to educate within our churches the critical nature of the roles of both husband and wife, mother and father. How many times have you seen programs in the church where young men are taught what it means to be a husband according to biblical definition. Where have you seen that? Have you seen anything like that? I haven't seen anything like that. I've seen plenty of stuff where there's a continuing focus on equality according to the world. Equality of position. Equality of power. Equality of all these things. I've seen plenty of that sort of stuff. But not the way the Bible describes it. And Satan's intentional on this issue. Splitting up Mum and Dad.

Liberal politicians and advocacy associations have increased the rate of divorce in the United States enormously by enacting policies based on the premise that fatherhood is not important. The result has been a host of social, psychological, and economic problems suffered by children caused by their fatherlessness. [<http://www.childrensjustice.org/fatherlessness1.htm>]

I don't have time to go into all this but the belief in evolution is driving most of this. We're just biological animals. Look at the animals. People who have children. Father disappears. Mother disappears or whatever. It's irrelevant anymore. As if we're just animals. And a lot of our social systems are based on this type of thinking.

All right. A major cause of the increased divorce rate has been the introduction of "no-fault" divorce coupled with the policy of family courts of awarding the mother solely, instead of both parents jointly, exclusive physical custody of the children (unless the mother is grossly unfit) and requiring the father to pay child support sufficient for the mother and children to maintain their former standard of living, even though it impoverishes him (courts often garnish the man's paycheck directly). Once rare, divorce is now common and two-thirds of divorces in the U.S. are initiated by women. [<http://health.discovery.com/centers/loverelationships/articles/divorce.html>]

Now, there's another side to this story. That's a one-sided argument. But that's certainly one side. The other side is women have been put in intolerable situations. Men are being irresponsible and just drinking all the wages and bashing up wives and children and causing all kinds of problems. And so we need to try and understand how we can address this kind of issues. If you're watching television and movies and stuff, these concepts are constantly being thrown at you, constantly being pumped into your head. And as I say, our church is succumbing to these things. It's not responding to it very well at all. Not in my understanding of things. We need to get back to what the Bible talks about.

The state has essentially told women, "Feel free to leave your husband whenever you feel like it, no matter how trivial the reason, because the state will make sure you keep your children and your husband's income." The result is that in millions of broken families, the state has moved in to assume the role of head of the family and "parent" to both mother and father.

Again, there's another side to this story. But this is why I talked about Centrelink. "You don't need the father. Just get Centrelink to look after you. No problem at all." Don't try and work it out. Just move on.

All right. Just before we look at that particular issue, I want to appeal to those of us that are here and I guess this presentation hasn't been so much, touchy-feely, warm, fuzzy, talk presentation. This is hardcore stuff about what families are really about that we need to go in and say, "God, what does it mean to be a family?" And some of the ways that we've tried to respond to this, and I'm suggesting this to you as something that could be very powerful, is that understanding the need for children to receive blessing from their father; I began to understand the importance of my role to bless my children. And Jesus did that in Mark Chapter 10. I talked about that this morning. The children's story. So every Friday night, we open Sabbath. I bring the boys to myself. They kneel down and I place my hands upon them. And I pronounce a blessing over my boys. I tell them, "You're my sons. I love you. You are precious to me. And you will grow up to be strong young men for Jesus." And in that capacity, and because of their desire to please and follow my role model, because the glory of children is their father, those words are prophetic. Prophetic. Because whether we realize it or not, as we grow up, we spend the rest of our lives either denying or confirming the words that our parents spoke to us. Confirming or denying what they told us. What they thought of us.

And so this is what I see I need to do for my children. I tell my sons, "You are precious. You are important. You have value. You're important to me. I believe that you'll grow up to be a strong young man. I have confidence in you." If you hear that week after week, week after week, someone telling you they have confidence in you and that they feel that you will be successful and you will do well, do you think that's going to rub off? I believe so. And then we spend some time. I read to my wife Proverbs 31 because I want my sons to understand how they should treat a woman. I need to reaffirm her identity in their eyes, and in my eyes remind myself, "A virtuous woman who can find, for her value is above rubies." She does this. She does this. And I say to my boys, "Do we appreciate what Mother does for us? Do we appreciate her role in the home, all the trouble she goes to?" Because the Spirit of prophecy says, there's one thing that a mother needs in the home is appreciation. To teach my boys, "When you receive a meal and she's prepared a meal, you thank her for that meal." Not because you have to but because you realize all the work that she's gone into: she's gone out, she shopped, she's done this, she's had to weigh all this stuff. She's done a lot of work. And we need to appreciate it. And hopefully by doing that, when my boys grow up and get to the point where they get married, they will learn to appreciate their wife and not just sit down and eat and not express any words because a woman needs to hear the words, not just have the money handed over.

And then my wife will read to me from Psalms 112 about what it is to be a righteous man. A man that has compassion and is gracious and is loving, who guides his affairs with discretion, who leads his family well. And then I'm reminded of my responsibility. And we've been blessed as we've tried to reaffirm the roles that God has given us as father, mother, and children. There've been times when I have forgotten to have the blessing and my son will come to me and say, "Dad, we haven't done the blessing yet. Where's my blessing?" There is power in simple things! Simple things.

We sat down the other night and I'd been reading 'Adventist Home' and it says that the father is the house band of home treasures. The home treasures are the memories and the experiences that we share together as family that are precious to us. And it is my responsibility to ensure that those things continue and are reminded of. And I said, "Lord, how do I do that?" When I read these books, sometimes, as you do, you read something like 'Adventist Home.' You read something like 'Child Guidance.' If you're in a performance-based kingdom, you're going to get very depressed reading those books. But those books are not designed as a how-to. They're not designed for that. They're designed as "This is God's promise to you. This is what He wants to give you." "You have to come to Me and pray and ask how to do these things. I'm not going to give you a how-to." There are so many how-to books out there. How to do this, how to do this. It's all legalism. You got to get it through God. Get on your knees and pray and ask Him, "How do I do this?"

And so I sat down and I said, "Let's just spend tonight sharing three things that we appreciate about each other." It's only a simple little thing. And I began to share what I appreciated about my son. Three things that I appreciate about Michael. And then Daniel. And then about my wife. I'm modelling to my son what it means to show appreciation. And then my wife began to share. And then Michael began to share. And then after that, because we'd shared things that we appreciated about each other, we then felt comfortable and able to share the things where we felt we'd let each other down. And we started to share, "Look, I'm sorry about this. I made a mistake here." And it was at that point that my son put his head down and he began to cry. And it moves me now as I think about it, as he realized that he had not shown the appreciation to his mother and his father as he should. The Holy Spirit spoke to him through that simple process. He was affirmed and that allowed him to reveal where he felt he was failing and then the spirit was able to speak to him and convict him that he'd been unappreciative. I'd been praying, "Lord, how do I show my son that he lacks gratitude? He doesn't appreciate the things that he's getting." And God says to me, "Do the things that I've asked you to do and leave the rest to Me. I will look after it. I will take care of it. I will make sure that your son shows gratitude." It just blew me away.

And so I'm asking you to consider these things. To reclaim the family roles that God has given to us so that our children can be blessed.

Matt Rogers. Anyone know Matt Rogers? Some footballer. He's a footballer. Famous footballer, I think. I was blown away by this statement. This is a man who plays football. He makes a living out of bouncing off other men, beating other peoples' heads and stomping on them with studs and stuff like that. He's in a tough profession. And this is what he said about his dad who had an untimely death, Steve Rogers. He said this, "Dad was the softest, most gentle human being." Now, Matt could have said lots of things about his dad and how tough his dad was and how great he was. But this is the room that he went into and shared with people at the funeral. "When I was young, he would stroke my hair and I would fall asleep in his arms." This is coming from a tough footballer. Footballers aren't suppose to say stuff like this. "He would make me feel so safe. All I ever wanted to be was just like Dad. You're my hero. I'll miss you everyday for the rest of my life. I love you, Dad."

That's why this verse says, "Children's children are the crown of old men, and the glory of children is their father." (Proverbs 17:6)

I've got another little audio-visual that I'd like to share with you, called "A Father's Love Letter." The quality's not the best but I think you'll appreciate it, what God wants to say to us. I find it hard to sit through this unemotional. But it's very powerful.

[Audio-visual starts at 61:51]

"The words you are about to experience are true. They will change your life if you let them. For they come from the very heart of God. He loves you. And He is the Father you have been looking for all your life. This is His love letter to you.

"My child, you may not know Me but I know everything about you. (Psalms 139:1) I know when you sit down and when you rise up. (Psalms 139:2) I'm familiar with all your ways. (Psalms 139:3) Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. (Matthew 10:29-31) For you were made in My image. (Genesis 1:27) In Me you live and move and have your being, for you are My offspring. (Acts 17:28) I knew you even before you were conceived. (Jeremiah 1:4-5) I chose you when I planned creation. (Ephesians 1:11-12) You are not a mistake. For all your days are written in My book. (Psalms 139:15-16) I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. (Acts 17:26) You are fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalms 139:14) I knit you together in your mother's womb (Psalms 139:14) and brought you forth on the day you were born. (Psalms 71:6) I've been misrepresented by those who don't know Me. (John 8:41-44) I'm not distant and angry but I'm the complete expression of love.

(1 John 4:16) And it is my desire to lavish My love on you simply because you are my child and I'm your Father. (1 John 3:1)

"I offer you more than what your earthly father ever could. (Matthew 7:11) For I am the perfect Father. (Matthew 5:48) Every good gift that you receive comes from My hand, (James 1:17) for I am your provider and I meet all your needs. (Matthew 6:31-33) My plan for your future is always filled with hope (Jeremiah 29:11) because I love you with an everlasting love. (Jeremiah 31:3) My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. (Psalms 139:17-18) And I rejoice over you with singing. (Zephaniah 3:17) I will never stop doing good to you. (Jeremiah 32:40) For you are my treasured possession. (Exodus 19:5)

"I desire to establish you with all My heart and all My soul. (Jeremiah 32:41) And I want to show you great and marvellous things. (Jeremiah 33:3) If you seek me with all your heart, you'll find Me. (Deuteronomy 4:29) Delight in Me and I will give you the desires of your heart (Psalms 37:4) for it is I who gave you those desires. (Philippians 2:13) I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. (Ephesians 3:20) For I am your greatest encourager. (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17) I'm also the Father who comforts you at all your troubles. (1 Corinthians 1:4) When you are broken-hearted, I am close to you. (Psalms 34:18) As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to My heart. (Isaiah 40:11) One day, I will wipe away every tear from your eyes and I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. (Revelation 21:3-4)

"I'm your Father. And I love you even as I love my Son, Jesus. (John 17:23) For in Jesus, My love for you is revealed. (John 17:26) He is the exact representation of My being. (Hebrews 1:3) He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you, (Romans 8:31) and to tell you that I am not counting your sins. Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19) His death was the ultimate expression of My love for you. (1 John 4:10) I gave up everything I love that I might gain your love. (Romans 8:32) If you receive the gift of my Son, Jesus, you receive Me. (1 John 2:23) And nothing will ever separate you from My love again. (Romans 8:38-39)

"Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. (Luke 15:7) I have always been the Father and will always be Father. (Ephesians 3:14-15) My question is, would you be My child? (John 1:12-13) I am waiting for you. (Luke 15:11-32)"

Love,
Your Dad
Almighty God

[End of Video - 68:22]