

**Lesson 22 - Be Steadfast in Your Calling - 1 Corinthians 7:12-24 - Craig Crawshaw**

Today, as always, I want to be true to the text, and teach the principles therein. But as we will see, the greater principles herein will be applicable to a special teaching for Father’s Day. But first, let us discern the direct meaning of the text.

**THE TEACHING OF THE PASSAGE**

To begin we must address Paul’s words at the beginning of our passage, verse 12:

“But to the rest I say, not the Lord...” What does this mean? It surely does *not* mean that Paul is giving his opinion apart from the Lord’s will on the matter. No, he is simply saying “as to the rest” of your questions regarding marriage, the Lord Jesus did not give direct teaching while on the earth. But as His specially called apostle, I am confident of His mind on this matter. And so here I share God’s will with you.

***1 Corinthians 7:12-24 READ ALL***

Verses 12-24 deal with what to do when one married partner is saved and the other is not. It is advice for “mixed marriages,” spiritually speaking. And the basic principle is clear: remain as you are. Don’t divorce an unsaved partner – God just might use you to bring the other to Himself. Be steadfast in your devotion to God, which includes your steadfast devotion to the marriage. Paul reinforces this principle three times in this short section – verses 17, 20 and 24. “Remain in that condition” he says twice. And once he says, “in this manner let him walk.” In all three cases he is saying, “stay married” and “be faithful to your calling.”

Amazingly, in verse 14 Paul teaches: “for the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband.” And he goes on to say that even the children in such a household are “holy,” or “sanctified.” Surely, we cannot take this to mean that they are saved simply because the one spouse is saved. But it does mean that the family is “set apart” (sanctified) for God’s blessing and special attention. The point is, God will use the believing spouse to be a strong influence on the household for Christ – hopefully saving the others, but surely affecting them for good. If this is your situation, dear believer, be encouraged! And be steadfast in your devotion to Christ for the sake of your family.

**THE OVERARCHING PRINCIPLE: BE STEADFAST IN YOUR CALLING**

Our passage teaches us to be steadfast in your calling of marriage, even when married to an unbeliever.

The greater principle that can be applied is to be steadfast to your calling in whatever situation you find yourself. Specifically, be steadfast in your calling as an employer or employee. Be steadfast in your commitments made to others. Be steadfast to your church. And be steadfast to your role in your family.

Be the best spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother, uncle or aunt, niece or nephew you can be. Be steadfast in your responsibility. Don’t shirk or ignore your godly calling.

And for today's consideration on Father's Day, I want us to focus on what it means to be the best FATHER, or MAN OF GOD that you can be. I have done a study of the Psalms and found 4 key qualities of the "blessed man" that I want us to consider. (Good news, ladies: all these principles apply to you as well).

**The four: Blessed is the man whose...**

**...DELIGHT, STRENGTH, TRUST and FEAR is in the Lord.**

## **DELIGHT**

The first principle for a godly father (man; woman) is, "Blessed is the man who delights in the law of the Lord." We find this in Psalm 1, verse 2. Surrounding verses show that this blessing comes from:

1. Shunning evil influences (v. 1)
2. Rejoicing in God's benevolent rules of life (v. 2a)
3. Meditating on His Word continually (v. 2b) In this you, dad?

This "delight" implies REJOICING

***Philippians 4:4*** Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, rejoice!

And this "delight" implies THANKSGIVING

***1 Thessalonians 5:18*** In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

It is not that every circumstance is God's will for you, but that your giving thanks to God through the circumstance is God's will for you. As it has been said so well, it is better to be one who is HUMBLY GRATEFUL than one who is GRUMBLY HATEFUL. Which do you tend to be, dad?

Psalm 16:5-9 teaches us to delight in our circumstance, seeing the "positive" or the "silver lining" in all that God has provided.

***Psalm 16:6*** The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me. I will bless the Lord who has counseled me; indeed, my mind instructs me in the night. I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will dwell securely.

Whatever our circumstance, can we not delight in our heritage, His counsel and his conscience within to guide? Can we not delight that the Lord is ever with us so that we will not be shaken? Can we not be glad and rejoice in our beating heart and breathing lungs; and in God keeping us alive? YES!

And Psalm 127:3-5 gives us one more important reason to delight as fathers.

***Psalm 127:3-5*** Behold children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them?

Dad's, do you truly see your child or children as a gift of the Lord and as a reward? Yes, they are sometimes a "pain" and certainly a challenge. But the blessed father sees each as a gift and a reward. And the more the better! No matter how many are in your "quiver" you are blessed, so DELIGHT, DAD!

## STRENGTH

Psalm 84:5-12 teaches us a second principle of the godly man (or woman): his STRENGTH is found in the Lord, and not in any other prop or crutch – job, church, family, income, personality or status.

**Psalm 84:5-12** *How blessed is the man whose strength is in You, in whose heart are the highways to Zion! Passing through the valley of Baca (weeping) they make it a spring; the early rain also covers it with blessings. They go from strength to strength, every one of them appears before God in Zion.*

Here we see that the one blessed of God make God his strength always. The road from his heart to heaven is like a highway often travelled! The blessed man seeks God's strength in prayer continually. And notice that even when travelling through bitter roads of weeping, this blessed man discovers blessings along the road and "makes it a spring." This is another way of saying "he makes lemonade out of lemons." He goes "from strength to strength" (not from sorrow to sorrow). In other words, his memory is marked by the good, not by the sorrowful. His strength is in making the most of every difficult circumstance and looking always to God as His guide.

And if you read on in this psalm, you will see that the blessed man finds great strength in PRAYER, CHURCH and God's GOODNESS always. Is this you, dad? It should be!

## TRUST

Our third principle for the blessed man is found both at the end of Psalm 84, and in Psalm 40:4.

**Psalm 40:4** *How blessed is the man who has made the Lord his trust.*

I think we would agree that trust is earned over time and can be easily lost or broken when one you have trusted let's you down by breaking trust. That is why putting full trust in the Lord is so blessed – God is 100% faithful and will never fail your trust. As Lamentations 3:23 says, from which we sing the beloved hymn, "Great is Your faithfulness."

The man or woman of God who is blessed is the one who trusts in God completely.

- **THE BASIS OF TRUST – our salvation**

**Psalm 40:2-3** *He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and trust in the Lord.*

- **THE DEMAND OF TRUST – full buy in**

**Proverbs 3:5-6** *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

- **THE LIVING OUT OF TRUST - God's good will prevail**

**Romans 8:28** *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

It is the blessed father who trusts in the Lord to the extent that He truly believes and lives his life on the truth that despite the letdowns and twists and turns of life, God is somehow working His good for those who love and trust God through it all. You gotta believe! You gotta trust, dad!

## FEAR

Our fourth and last principle for the blessed man is found in many psalms, but especially in Psalm 112.

***Psalm 112: 1 Praise the Lord! How blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments.***

To fear the Lord is to reverence and respect Him, yes. But far more, it is to be in absolute awe of His power, majesty and sovereignty over all of creation. To fear God is to realize that more than being the all-loving God, He is the all-hating God of rebellion, lukewarmness, slothfulness, immorality, disobedience and disrespect. To fear God is to know that while He blesses those who seek after Him, He often withdraws His blessing from those who turn from Him and ignore Him.

To fear God is to understand that He disciplines those He loves as well as punishes those who disobey. (Hebrews 12:6). To fear God is to understand that in order to conform us to the image of His Son, we must be purified in the fire of trials (1 Peter 1:6-7). To fear God is to understand that He has never promised to keep us from distress, disaster and disappointment, but that His promise is to strengthen, guide and refine us through those times, while never abandoning us. To fear God is to understand that ...

***2 Corinthians 5:10 We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.***

So, "Happy Father's Day," dad. Or should I say, "Blessed Father's Day" to those who have put their DELIGHT, STRENGTH, TRUST and FEAR in the Lord. And likewise, blessed are you, each man and woman, who has put your DELIGHT, STRENGTH, TRUST and FEAR in the Lord. God's special blessing is for all who strive to make these four things the pattern for your life.

Be steadfast in your calling! You find yourself in a mixed marriage where you are a believer and your spouse is not (yet) – then stay as you are, committed to be a strong influence on your spouse and family.

Be steadfast in your calling! If you are a father, or mother, or any other "calling" of life – married or single, be resolute in this four-fold calling of God on you for a blessed life.

PUT YOUR DELIGHT, STRENGTH, TRUST and FEAR in Him. A blessed Father's Day to all! Amen.