

IS THERE A FATHER IN THE HOUSE?

By Cecil Culbreth

TEXT: ESTHER 4:10-17

THEME: Godly men can influence a generation and that influence can lead to their salvation

PURPOSE: To encourage men to be positive roles models and take leadership in spiritual things.

INTRO: What is a Father? Fathers are men who give daughters away to other men who aren't nearly good enough, so that they can have children that are smarter than anybody's.

Erwin Lutzer in his book *When You've Been Wronged*, tells this story: "A young pastor began a ministry on Saturday mornings to the inmates of the local county jail. Each week he'd go into the jail cells and conduct Bible studies and prayer sessions among the inmates -- mostly young white men who were doing time for anything from burglary to habitual drug use. As he'd enter the jail the despair and anger among these nineteen to twenty-four-year-olds was palpable.

"When the young pastor asked the warden how so many young men with great promise could end up in such a place, the warden sighed and said, 'This place is filled with boys who got tired of waiting for their dads to keep their promises -- promises to provide, promises to show up and spend time with them, promises to come home at night -- they finally got so angry with the injustice of it, they went out and did stupid things.'

FATHERLESS DAUGHTERS:

111% ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE CHILDREN AS TEENAGERS

164% MORE LIKELY TO HAVE AN OUT-OF-WEDLOCK BIRTH.

Girls without a father in their life are two and a half times as likely to get pregnant; 53 percent more likely to commit suicide.

FATHERLESS SONS:

63 percent more likely to run away and

37 percent more likely to abuse drugs.

Both girls and boys without a father are twice as likely to drop out of high school, twice as likely to end up in jail, and nearly four times as likely to need help for emotional or behavioral problems.

(Source of above info: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services press release, "HHS Launches 'Be Their Dad' Parental Responsibility Campaign" (March 26, 1999)

One day a boy asked his busy father, "Dad, how much money do you earn in an hour?" The impatient dad answered, "I don't know, I guess I make about \$50 an hour when I'm at work. Now don't bother me, I'm busy." After a couple of weeks of doing odd jobs around his neighborhood, the little boy approached his dad one evening and said, "Dad, here's \$25. Can I buy 30 minutes of your time so we can play together?"

I don't know who that little boy was, but my heart goes out to him.

One study of the behavior patterns of parents and youth indicated that they spend about 4 minutes a day in meaningful conversation with mom and about 2 1/2 minutes a day with dad. No wonder the little boy was trying to buy his father's time. We live in a society that knows how to father a child without being a father to that child.

Our scripture passage today is one of the great stories in the Old Testament. We often hear sermons on Esther, but today, I want to examine Moredecai.

While Mordecai was not the father of Esther, he assumed the role and the responsibility to be a father to her. Mordecai became a stabilizing force in Esther's life. His character was such that he was able to influence Esther to live for God even in an ungodly environment. When he overheard about the assassination plot to kill the king, Mordecai demonstrated he was a man of conviction who did the right thing even though he was not immediately rewarded for what he did.

Mordecai was the father that spoke up when he realized that things were not right. Is there a father in the house? Is there a man who will speak up when things are not right?

Pastor Martin Niemoller, who lived in Nazi Germany said, "they came for the communists, and I didn't object, for I was not a communist. They came for the socialists, and I didn't object because I was not a socialist. They then came for the labor leaders, and I didn't object because I was not a labor leader. They came for the Jews, and I didn't object because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to object."

IS THERE A FATHER IN THE HOUSE? Is there someone who is willing to influence others for God.

Jesus said that we were to be salt and light. Both of these are elements of influence. Men, we are called by God to be a positive influence on others.

In his role as a father we see Mordecai's...

I. COMPASSION FOR A YOUNGER GENERATION MOVED HIM TO ACTION

4:1; TORN HIS CLOTHES, PUT ON SACKCLOTH AND ASHES AND CRIED OUT.

Mordecai showed compassion for the Jews. His compassion moved him to action. In Esther 7:3 Esther demonstrated the same compassion. Mordecai had influenced her.

If you looked out the window of your house and saw a huge Doberman in the attack mode and noticed that the object of his attack was the neighbor's cat, most of men would probably say something like, "May you rest well in heaven cat." We probably would not risk getting hurt to save the neighbor's cat. However, if we looked out the window and saw the same scene except the object of attack was our child or grandchild, we would probably say, "The Doberman is dead, he doesn't stand a chance -- because we would risk life and limb to save the child. Men, there is a generation that is marked for destruction by the enemy. Jesus put it this way, he said there is a thief who comes to steal, kill and destroy."

There is an enemy who goes about like as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." We need fathers with spiritual insight who see this enemy's goal is the destruction of a generation. He comes to steal kill and to destroy, but Jesus said, "I am come that you might have life. It is time for fathers to move into action on behalf of a generation. We have a message of hope for a generation that is headed for destruction. Today's generation feels life is hopeless. They are looking for someone with a message of hope.

My compassion says I can no longer be silent. I must do something. I must give it my best and leave the results in God's hands. Men, you can have a positive influence on a generation.

Is there a father in the house?

IN HIS ROLE AS A FATHER WE SEE MORDECAI'S:

II. CONVICTIONS GAVE HIM THE FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Est 4:13-14

13 And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. 14 For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" NKJV

V. 16 "EVEN THOUGH IT IS AGAINST THE LAW"

We see from Esther 3:13, that the governmental leaders were out of touch with the people in their country. King Ahasuerus had no clue that his wife was a Jew. He had no clue that a lot of the people in his kingdom were Jews. He was out of touch. Pay him the right amount of money and he would go against what was right. Pay him the right amount of money and his convictions if any went out the window. After he signed the law, the king & Haman sat down to drink, but the city was perplexed. (Esther 3:15)

This is not a political sermon -- but isn't it time somebody start speaking about righteousness, godliness, morality, honesty. It may not be popular to speak about those things today, but it is the right thing to do. Where would the African American be today if Rosa Parks would have given up her seat and moved to the back of the bus? **Just because something is a law, does not mean it is right.** The courts can give a legal opinion, but that does not mean it is right. Hitler was able to accomplish what he did in Germany because he made the laws that allow him to do what he wanted to do even though it was not right.

Give us some fathers who will speak up when things are not right. Daniel prayed three times a day in spite of the law of the king.

In 1991 a few students gathered at the flagpole in front of their school and prayed. They were promptly arrest. That is a government that is out of touch. But look what happened as a result of some students who understood it was time to speak. Now each year over 3 million students pray at their flagpole. Somebody did what was right.

IT IS TIME FOR FATHERS TO SPEAK.

IS THERE A FATHER IN THE HOUSE?

Gallup pollsters asked teenagers, "What makes a good Father?"

I find their answers for interesting:

- Shows respect and caring for the children's mother 91%
- Teaches his children to be polite 90%
- Tells his children he loves them at least once a week 85%
- Hugs his children at least once a week 75%
- Asks his children how their day went 70%
- Teaches his children they are loved by God 65%
- Tells them the dreams and desires he has for their future 59%
- Helps his children with homework 71%
- Punishes them when they have broken a rule at home 71%
- Punishes them when they have gotten in trouble at school 68%
- Teaches his children how to ride a bike or play a sport 81%
- Takes them shopping to buy the things they need 67%
- Takes his children on hikes, nature trips, fishing 55%
- Takes his children to church 52%

There is a generation looking for some men who will be a positive influence in their lives.

IS THERE A FATHER IN THE HOUSE THAT IS WILLING TO STAND FOR WHAT IS RIGHT?

IN MORDECAI'S ROLE AS A FATHER WE SEE THE:

III. COVENANT OF PRAYER GAVE THE POWER FOR ACTION

(Esther 4:16) Who taught Esther about prayer and fasting?

Moredecai knew he could not go to the king himself. He must work through Esther. Esther knew she must have the support of Mordecai. A covenant agreement was made. We are in this together. They could not ignore the problem thinking it would go away. We must make prayer covenants if we are going to see things change. We need one another. There is a role for everyone.

There is probably not one person in this auditorium today that is not concerned about the future of our nation especially when you consider the negative things that are taking place in our society. It was Abraham Lincoln who said that as the classroom goes in one generation so the government goes in the next. Hitler was able to get away with what he did in Germany because he captivated the youth of Germany. Captive a nation's youth and you will captivate a nation.

The students will not impact the schools without the support of loving, caring, praying adults. Adults you will not impact the schools without working with the students. We must join together -- we need one another. Jesus put it this way, "If any two shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my father which is in heaven." (Matthew 18:18-20)

We would not have to spend so much time teaching our kids to "say not to drugs" if we would spend more time saying "yes to prayer." The covenant of prayer gives us the power to act.

Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you (Leviticus 26:8). The ratio goes from 1 to 20, to 1 to 100.

The covenant of prayer gives us the power to act. Esther said, "If I perish, I perish." Mordecai's encouragement and prayer gave Esther the courage to take a risk to save her generation. It is not always easy to take a bold stand of Christ. There is no guarantee of acceptance. But you will never know until you take that risk.

IS THERE A FATHER IN THE HOUSE that will commit to pray for a generation?

Mordecai had confidence that God would work on his behalf (Esther 4:14)

The issue was not, "is God going to do something"? God was going to do something. Mordecai demonstrated a confidence that God was going to work. His confidence became contagious. Esther was willing to take a step of faith that involved great personal risk because of the confidence that Mordecai had that God was going to work. It was settled. God was going to deliver his people. The issue was "who is going to allow God to use them?"

IS THERE A FATHER IN THE HOUSE?

Men, perhaps if we demonstrated confidence that God was going to do something the young people might be touched by our faith. Mordecai understood that Esther was not in the king's palace just for her ego. God had placed her there for a purpose.

Where has God placed you? Understand that God has a plan to use you. Never forget that God is in control of the nations (Esther 7:9; 9:1). Remember he raises up kings and kingdoms and pulls down kings and kingdoms. God is still in control. (Jeremiah 18:7-10)

Conclusion: For those Fathers who are present today, may I say to you, Be a Father to your kids. Lay your hands on your kids and declare God's blessing on their lives. Plead the blood of Jesus on their lives. Say to your kids, "I bless the intelligence God has given you. I bless the understanding that God has put in your heart. I bless the response that you have to the Word of God. I bless the honesty you demonstrate to your mother and me. I bless your gifting. I bless your skills. I bless the redemption that God has provided for your life." This is speaking the blessing after the Old Testament pattern, which breaks the bondage on a child's heart who needs the acceptance and approval of his or her father.

Be a father in the house.

But can I also say to every man today, be a Father to someone. There are kids in our community that need a positive role model. Kids whom no one loves or cares about. There was a man who retired, a grandfather, a bald-headed man in his late sixties, who volunteered his services at the local high school. Because of his love and attention to those students, he became one of the most loved people on the campus. He became a Father in the House.

Where are the men like Moses who will speak to the young men as spoke to Joshua:
 "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. 8 And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed." (Deuteronomy 31:7-8 NKJV)

Where are the godly fathers like David who inspired his son Solomon from his deathbed and said:

“Be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. 3 And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn;” (1 Kings 2:2-4 NKJV)

Where are the modern Pauls who will say with assurance to the young insecure Timothy’s of our time:

“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 13 Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.” (1 Timothy 4:12-13 NKJV)

Be a Father in the House.

About The Author

Cecil Culbreth is the founder of His Story Ministries. His Story facilitates scripture distribution and prayer for the purpose of evangelizing youth and children in the United States. Culbreth holds a consistent speaking schedule in churches, conferences, retreats, missions events and is author of “Pray The Promises”.