

Father's Day 2026

First a disclaimer. This is a father's day talk so it is addressed to active fathers. I mean active in the sense that your current primary responsibility is the care, education, and nurturing of your children. Now to those who don't fit this criterion, please still listen. The material is still Biblical and provides a way to come along side and encourage and pray for those who are in the most important chapter of their lives.

Our verse of focus this morning is 1 Chron 7:40. You wouldn't think there was a verse in 1 Chron that addresses fatherhood but there is. It is a brief description of the men of the tribe of Ashur and it is worth teasing apart. *All these were descendants of Asher—heads of families, choice men, brave warriors, and outstanding leaders.* Notice there are four phrases that describe these men and these four phrases are wonderful admonitions to fathers. Let's look at each.

Heads of families. Headship is a culturally divisive subject these days as there are two ways to look at the role of women within Church circles. The first is the complementarian (or traditional) view that holds that men and women are equal in position but are different in function. In other words, it recognizes that men and women are to equally share in dominion over the earth, but because the woman was taken from man and created to be his compliment and helpmate, there are differences between them, both physical and psychological, that determine distinct roles and functions within their partnership and society at large.

The other view is termed the egalitarian view which states there are no differences between men and woman either in role or function. This is now the predominant cultural view as well. So when one talks of headship to an egalitarian (whether they are a believer or not) you will likely be labeled at best a chauvinist and at worst a misogynist, for the idea of headship is clearly a complementarian principle.

What is headship? Our definition can be taken from two verses, 1 Cor 11:3 and Eph 5:21-31. Let me read them: 1 Cor 11:3, *But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man,* ^[a] *and the head of Christ is God, and Eph 5:21-31, Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.* ²² *Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.* ²³ *For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.* ²⁴ *Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.* ²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her* ²⁶ *to make her holy, cleansing* ^[b] *her by the washing with water through the word,* ²⁷ *and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.* ²⁸ *In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.* ²⁹ *After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—* ³⁰ *for we are members of his body.* ³¹ *For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.*

From 1 Cor 11:3, we note God is the head of Christ and Christ submits to the Father. Christ is the head of the church and the church submits to Christ. The man is the head of the woman, so the woman submits to her husband. From Eph 5:21-31 we note the model of submission is Christ and the model of love is Christ. So here is the definition of headship:

Headship is the idea that God establishes a structure of authority and responsibility within relationships, which is governed by Christ's sacrificial submission and love.

We could dwell on these two passages a long time but I want to draw out and highlight three implications this definition means for you fathers.

First, because you are the head, you are to assume your God given authority within your home. There is a clear authority structure in scripture; First there is Christ's authority over everything. Eph 1:22 says *God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head of all things for the benefit of the church*. Second, there is apostolic authority; Jesus granted his 12 disciples authority over demons and spirits and to heal people of illness and disease (Mt 10:1). Third, there is church authority, as elders are appointed to oversee the flock, and fourth, there is family authority as the man is the head of his wife (Eph 5:23). What does this mean? Authority means to govern and to be the representative head. You are also the one who is responsible for what happens. It doesn't mean you are superior, or to be overbearing, demanding, in charge, can make unilateral decisions, or otherwise be a thug. Scripture does not teach a patrimonial hierarchy. Rather, as Christ nourishes, protects, unifies, sustains, grows, and oversees the church, so our role as husbands is to do the same for our wives and families. As Eph 5:25 states you are to love her as *Christ loved the church, and gave himself up for her* and as vs 28 states, *husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies*.

Second, because you are the head you are to be the spiritual leader of your home. Primarily, leadership in your home means you take the lead in setting its spiritual tone. Everything else flows out of this. If the tone in your home is tuned toward God then secondary things like how you make and share decisions with your spouse, how you discipline, how you manage your finances, how you treat your spouse and children, all become a reflection of a God centered life. Every home has a vibe—and the man is the one who sets it. Make sure your home reflects godliness, hospitality, generosity, openness, warmth, fun, and love. I don't want to give a list of things to do (bible study, etc.) because I don't want it to feel legalistic. But I will say this; if you love God, you will find ways to share your love of God with your family. Let the Spirit of God lead you in what those activities may be.

Think of your family as three concentric circles within your home. The first is yourself, the second, your wife, and the third, your children. Then use the evangelical term, pastor as a description of yourself. In other words, you are the pastor of this little church called your family. Now apply it to your domicile.

1. Yourself: how do you pastor yourself? Are you growing? Are you nurturing yourself?
2. Beloved: Eph 5:29, you are to nourish (grow) and cherish (warm) her.
3. Kids, Eph 6:4, *do not provoke but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*. Ps 127, you have a quiver full of kids, shoot straight with them.

Third, because you are the head, you are to assume accountability for your home. I have touched on this when discussing authority but I want to single this out. Being accountable means you are ultimately responsible for what happens at home, spiritually and otherwise. Adam was held accountable for Eve's sin. I have noted in my own marriage that if something is off and there is tension between my beloved

and me, probably 99% of the time the problem started with me. So own up, make amends, then do something to celebrate unity.

Choice men. Some translations have the word *approved*. The idea is to be men of virtuous character. This means being the right person who does the right thing. In other words, it is living a Spirit-filled and proverb infused life. *The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law* (Gal 5:22). In classical times young men were to master the four cardinal virtues. The word “cardinal” comes from the Latin word “cardio” which means hinge. In other words, your life hinged upon your mastery of these attributes.

1. They were Prudence (what we would call common sense, or the practical wisdom of knowing what to do in the many moral decisions of life).
2. Justice, or fairness (being equitable and right in your dealing with others).
3. Fortitude or Courage, (the idea of perseverance, persistence, resilience and doing the right thing even if hard), and lastly,
4. Temperance (the idea of self-restraint and mastering your fleshly appetites).

The cardinal virtues had their origin in the thoughts and writings of Plato and Aristotle, but really came to the forefront with the Stoic philosophers around 200 BC. However, Solomon had detailed them all in his book of proverbs 700 years earlier. The admonition is the same: be a man of good character!

Brave Men. The men of Ashur were known for their battle prowess and distinguished themselves in combat. Similarly, we enter a spiritual battle every day. First we fight sin. Men, how are we doing with that? Scripture says we fight against the desires and pull of our old sin nature, the worldly system of values and culture, and the devil himself. God gives us spiritual tools to protect us and wage war with those things that will take us down. Are you using them? If you were to take an assessment of your battles this past year, is there a trend towards holiness? It is an interesting thing we never share our victories over sin. I suppose that is just too close to home to share.

Second we fight to fulfill our God given responsibilities. It takes spiritual fortitude to guide and lead your home. It is not easy!

Outstanding leaders. What is a leader? Simply someone who inspires and influences others to reach a common goal. The men of Ashur were commended as leaders. I recognize not everyone can lead an organization, but that is not what this is getting at. In the home to be a leader is to infuse your home with love for God and each other, and open your walk to their examination. In other words walk the talk. There is nothing worse than to talk one way and live another. That doesn't mean you won't fail. We fail all the time, but when you do you admit to your family, I was wrong, forgive me, that is not how I should have managed the situation. That is the biggest gift to your children-that they see your faith is real.

Eli, and the sin of his sons, 1 Sam 2:12-17, 22-25 1 Sam 3:13

1. No respect for God vs 12, *Eli's sons were scoundrels; they had no regard for the Lord.*
2. No respect for the Priesthood, vs 13, *Now it was the practice of the priests that, whenever any of the people offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand while the meat was being boiled.*
3. No respect for the Sacrifice -they were thieves and used it to satisfy their own gluttony, 13-17, *and would plunge the fork into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot. Whatever the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is how they treated all the Israelites who came to Shiloh. ¹⁵ But even before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the person who was sacrificing, "Give the priest some meat to roast; he won't accept boiled meat from you, but only raw." ¹⁶ If the person said to him, "Let the fat be burned first, and then take whatever you want," the servant would answer, "No, hand it over now; if you don't, I'll take it by force." ¹⁷ This sin of the young men was very great in the Lord's sight, for they^[b] were treating the Lord's offering with contempt.*
4. No respect for Women, they were seducers and rapists, vs 22, *Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting.*
5. No respect for their Father, they would not listen, vs 25, *If one person sins against another, God^[d] may mediate for the offender; but if anyone sins against the Lord, who will intercede for them?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the Lord's will to put them to death.*
6. Eli failed to restrain, 3:13, *For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God,^[a] and he failed to restrain them.*

Mordecai and the obedience of Esther, Est 2:5-7, 2:10-11, 2:20, 4:1-17

1. He took responsibility 2:7, *Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother. This young woman, who was also known as Esther, had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died.*
2. She obeyed him in the moment, 2:10, *Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so.*
3. He had concern every day, 2:11, *Every day he walked back and forth near the courtyard of the harem to find out how Esther was and what was happening to her.*
4. She consistently followed his instructions, 2:20, *But Esther had kept secret her family background and nationality just as Mordecai had told her to do, for she continued to follow Mordecai's instructions as she had done when he was bringing her up.*
5. She rises to the challenge, 4:15-16, *Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶ "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."*

Compare and contrast (with assistance of AI)

	Eli	Mordecai
Discipline and boundaries:	Verbally rebuked, but failed to restrain	Set clear rules-demanded obedience
Involvement:	Low: Oblivious until complaints filed	High: paced daily
Priority:	Honored children over God	Honored God
Outcome:	Cursed and death	Promoted and honored
Style:	Passive	Active
	Lack of restraint	Structural guidance
	Feared confrontation	Healthy accountability
	No authority to mentorship	Had authority to mentorship

Eli

1. Understood headship—but didn't take authority, assume leadership, or took responsibility, 1 Sam 3:13
2. He was not a man of notable character for he honored his sons more than God.
3. He was not a brave man, for he failed to confront the sin of his sons.
4. He was not an outstanding leader for the spiritual tone he set led to disobedience and disrespect.

Mordecai

1. Understood headship—he recognized his authority, he assumed leadership, he took responsibility, 2:5-20.
2. He was a choice man, a man of notable character. He saved the King 2:19-23, He saved his people, Chapter 8 and 9.
3. He was definitely a brave man, 2:19-23, 4:1-17.
4. He was an outstanding leader, Chapters 8,9,10.