

FATHERS, DON'T HOLD BACK! (LUKE 11:9-12) 06/17/12
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, PASTOR LEE HENDON

AS MOST OF YOU KNOW, I LOST MY DAD ON JUNE 1. IT WAS A GOOD DEATH IN THAT HIS HEALTH HAD FAILED AT 87 WITH LITTLE QUALITY OF LIFE LEFT, HE WAS READY TO GO & HE WAS A STRONG BELIEVER. IN REMINISCING, I RECALL SOME OF THE THINGS I LEARNED FROM MY DAD:

1. WITH NO AUTO AIR CONDITIONERS BACK THEN MY DAD TOLD US THAT IF WE PUT OUR HANDS, FEET OR HEAD OUT THE WINDOW OF THE CAR WHILE IT WAS MOVING THEY COULD BLOW OFF & HE WOULD NOT GO BACK TO GET THEM.
2. CHILDREN ARE TO BE SEEN & NOT HEARD, DID YOU KNOW THAT?
3. IF WE MADE AN UGLY FACE IT COULD FREEZE THAT WAY - FOREVER!
4. HE WOULD SAY A WHIPPING HURT HIM MORE THAN IT HURTS US - GO FIGURE THAT....
5. IF ITS WORTH DOING THEN IT'S WORTH DOING RIGHT THE FIRST TIME.
6. RICH OR POOR, EVERYBODY PUTS THEIR PANTS ON ONE LEG AT A TIME.
7. CAN'T NEVER COULD DO NUTHING.
8. DON'T TALK BACK.
9. RESPECT YOUR ELDERS.
10. HIS FAVORITE WAS, DO AS I SAY, NOT AS I DO....

I LEARNED A GREAT DEAL FROM MY DAD - SOME OF IT HAS PROVED VERY VALUABLE TO ME IN LIFE, SOME OF IT I HAVE HAD TO UNLEARN. SUCH IT IS IN MOST FAMILIES. PARENTS, FATHERS, BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ARE GIVING TO YOUR CHILDREN. YOU CAN GIVE THEM A SPRING BOARD FORWARD INTO LIFE OR A HUGH WEIGHT TO DRAG THEM DOWN. IT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE! WE GIVE OUR CHILDREN A BLESSING OR A CURSE AS THEIR BIRTH RITE. THAT IS WHY WE HAVE SERMONS LIKE THIS - CHILDREN DO NOT COME WITH AN OPERATION MANUAL - GOD PROVIDES ONE!

I LOVE RODNEY ATKINS HIT SONG, "WATCHING YOU." HAVE YOU HEARD IT? IT'S ABT FATHER/SON & BEARS SHARING RT NOW :

DRIVIN' THROUGH TOWN JUST MY BOY AND ME

WITH A HAPPY MEAL IN HIS BOOSTER SEAT,
 KNOWIN' THAT HE COULDN'T HAVE THE TOY 'TIL HIS NUGGETS
 WERE GONE.
 A GREEN TRAFFIC LIGHT TURNED STRAIGHT TO RED
 I HIT MY BRAKES AND MUMBLED UNDER MY BREATH.
 HIS FRIES WENT A FLYIN', AND HIS ORANGE DRINK COVERED HIS
 LAP. WELL, THEN MY FOUR YEAR OLD SAID A FOUR LETTER WORD
 IT STARTED WITH "S" AND I WAS CONCERNED
 SO I SAID, "SON, NOW WHERE'D YOU LEARN TO TALK LIKE THAT?"

HE SAID, "I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU, DAD AIN'T THAT COOL?
 I'M YOUR BUCKAROO, I WANNA BE LIKE YOU.
 AND EAT ALL MY FOOD AND GROW AS TALL AS YOU ARE.
 WE GOT COWBOY BOOTS AND CAMO PANTS
 YEAH, WE'RE JUST ALIKE, HEY, AIN'T WE DAD?
 I WANT TO DO EVERYTHING YOU DO.
 SO I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU."

WE GOT BACK HOME AND I WENT TO THE BARN
 I BOWED MY HEAD AND I PRAYED REAL HARD
 SAID, "LORD, PLEASE HELP ME HELP MY STUPID SELF."
 JUST THIS SIDE OF BEDTIME LATER THAT NIGHT
 TURNIN' ON MY SON'S SCOOPY-DOO NIGHTLIGHT.
 HE CRAWLED OUT OF BED AND HE GOT DOWN ON HIS KNEES.
 HE CLOSED HIS LITTLE EYES, FOLDED HIS LITTLE HANDS
 SPOKE TO GOD LIKE HE WAS TALKIN' TO A FRIEND.
 AND I SAID, "SON, NOW WHERE'D YOU LEARN TO PRAY LIKE THAT?"

HE SAID, "I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU, DAD AIN'T THAT COOL?
 I'M YOUR BUCKAROO, I WANT TO BE LIKE YOU.
 AND EAT ALL MY FOOD AND GROW AS TALL AS YOU ARE.
 WE LIKE FIXIN' THINGS AND HOLDING MOMMA'S HAND
 YEAH, WE'RE JUST ALIKE, HEY, AIN'T WE DAD?
 I WANT TO DO EVERYTHING YOU DO; SO I'VE BEEN WATCHING
 YOU"

GIVING & RECEIVING BLESSINGS OR CURSES IS WHAT THIS
 PASSAGE IN LUKE IS ABOUT. IT IS PARTICULARLY ABOUT HOW
 GOD **HOLDS NOTHING BACK** IN GIVING BLESSINGS TO US AS GOD'S

CHILDREN. JESUS USES AS HIS SPRINGBOARD INTO HIS MESSAGE A PRESUMPTION ABOUT EARTHLY FATHERS BLESSING THEIR CHILDREN. KNOWING WHEN & HOW TO GIVE **GOOD GIFTS** IS A POWER WE EACH POSSESS AS PARENTS. **HOLD NOTHING BACK, FATHERS!** WE ARE IN THE POSITION OF BEING POWERFUL GIFT GIVERS WHICH IS TO NOT BE TREATED LIGHTLY. I HAVE GIVEN & RECEIVED FISH & EGGS (GOOD GIFTS) & SERPENTS & SCORPIONS (BAD GIFTS.) JESUS PRESUMED EVERY FATHER (PARENT) WOULD BE COMPELLED TO GIVE GOOD GIFTS - FISH & EGGS - TO THEIR CHILDREN. OH THAT IT WERE SO! BUT IT IS NOT - WE ARE DAILY CONFRONTED BY HEAD-LINES OF CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT & DEPRAVATION. THE NUMBER OF DEAD-BEAT-DADS WHO DO NOT GIVE A FLIP MUCH LESS GOOD GIFTS TO THEIR CHILDREN IS GROWING BY LEAPS & BOUNDS. FATHERS, PARENTS, BE A **SUPERMAN**, BE A **SUPERMAN**, IN THE LIVES OF THOSE YOU LOVE - GIVE GOOD GIFTS!

SAM KEEN WROTE ABOUT A WEALTHY FRIEND IN HIS BOOK, **TELLING YOUR STORY**, "MY GRANDFATHER WAS A TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY ROBBER BARON, A GIANT WHO TOOK WHAT HE WANTED. ANYONE WHO OWNED AN OIL FIELD WITHIN HIS REACH HAD REASON TO WORRY. GRANDFATHER CAME ON LIKE A TIDAL WAVE, CRUSHING & LIQUIDATING EVERYTHING IN HIS PATH. HE WAS A CLASSIC OIL KING. MY FATHER INHERITED A FORTUNE & AT THE AGE OF THIRTY DECIDED TO SIT IT OUT: NO WORK, NO SOCIETY, NO REAL FRIENDS. NOW HE & MY MOTHER DOLE OUT HUGE HUNKS OF MONEY TO ME, LIKE MONTHLY DOG BISCUITS, I GUESS THAT MAKES ME ***DEPENDENTLY*** WEALTHY, BUT ANYWAY I AM VERY RICH.

"BUT MONEY INHIBITS TOO. I LIVED LIKE A RARE ORCHID PAINTED INTO A LANDSCAPE, SO PROTECTED FROM THE HARD, REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES WHICH DEFINE MOST PEOPLE THAT I GREW UP SMOOTH, WITHOUT MUSCLES OR SCARS.... **THE REAL THINGS I NEEDED FROM MY FATHER HE NEVER OFFERED OR GAVE.**" FATHERS, SAY IT ISN'T SO, SAY IT ISN'T SO! LET US GIVE GOOD GIFTS THAT ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF OUR CHILDREN. SUCH GIFTS DO NOT DEPEND ON THEIR PRICE. IT IS NOT ABT THE MONEY!

THE BEST GIFTS COST MUCH MORE THAN MONEY. GOOD GIFTS ARE FOCUSED ON THE PERSONAL NEEDS OF THE CHILD. **ONE**

SIZE FITS ALL WILL NOT GET 'ER DUN. THERE COMES A TIME WHEN WE MUST GET DOWN INTO THE SAND BOX WITH OUR CHILD-REN TO EXPERIENCE THE CHILD'S WORLD WITH THEM - YEP, GOTTA TAKE THE TIME TO HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR CHILDREN. GOOD GIFTS ARE ABOUT WHO THE CHILD IS NOT ABOUT WHO WE ARE. EA CHILD IS SPECIAL & UNIQUE. CHILDREN HAVING THE SAME LAST NAME, SAME PARENTS, SAME HOME LIFE DO NOT MAKE CHILDREN THE SAME - NOT AT ALL - WHAT A DELIGHT! WHAT A PAIN! WHAT A CHALLENGE!

THE BIBLICAL BIAS IS THAT **EVERY CHILD HAS THE GOD GIVEN RIGHT TO A GOOD HOME, WITH GOOD, GODLY PARENTS.** TO GROW UP IN NO FEAR & WITHOUT VIOLENCE - NO SERPENTS OR SCORPIONS. GOOD GIFTS (FISH & EGGS) ALLOW OUR CHILDREN TO KNOW & EXPERIENCE LOVE, GRACE & ENCOURAGEMENT ON A DAILY BASIS. WE ARE TO NURTURE & NOURISH OUR CHILDREN BY THE GIFTS WE GIVE. THE BIBLE PASSAGE BEFORE US ASSUMES THIS TO BE SO. YES, I KNOW HOW TO SPELL ASSUME BUT I WOULD NOT SUGGEST WE USE THAT VERNACULAR ON GOD. WHAT GOD ASSUMES, WE ARE OBLIGED TO FOLLOW!

IT IS NOT TOO LATE FOR US TO BE POWERFUL IN OUR GIFT GIVING EVEN IF WE HAVE FAILED, BEEN ABUSIVE OR BEEN FORGET-FUL IN THE PAST - WE CAN CATCH UP - CHANGE OUR GIFT GIVING WAYS STARTING TODAY! FISH & EGGS NOURISH & NURTURE; SNAKES & SCORPIONS, MAIM & KILL. WHEN A PARENT (FATHERS) BRINGS A CHILD INTO THE WORLD IT IS WITH A **GOD ORDAINED PROMISE TO GIVE GOOD GIFTS!** THE GREATEST GIFT WE CAN EVER GIVE A CHILD IS THE LOVE OF GOD. LET US SO USE THE POWER OF OUR GIFT GIVING!