

The Journey to Biblical Manhood

Challenge 4: Fathering

Session 1: Fathering the Heart Trounces Fathering for Performance

Unedited Transcript

Pat Morley

Good morning, men. We are continuing in the series "The Journey to Biblical Manhood" this morning. Before we get too far along though, let's go ahead and do a shout out. I'm quite excited about this group. This group has been meeting since 2003. This is the first time that I've ever even known they existed, or you for that matter. There are ten men. There's a picture there, of course it's a little difficult to see their faces. Ten men, and they meet with us on Fridays at 6:30 AM. They meet for personal spiritual growth and accountability. Scott Campbell is the leader, Shoreline Community Church in Akron, Ohio. I wonder if you would join me in giving a very rousing, warm welcome to the men here that are led by Scott Campbell. One, two, three, hoorah. Welcome, guys. We're so glad to have you with us.

I wanted to mention also a couple things to you online guys. Number one is if you are online and we don't know about you yet, we'd love to. Send me an email at PatrickMorley@maninthemirror.org. We'd love to work in a shout out for you. Then secondly, something beautiful happened this week. Brian Russel, who is our director of online strategies has been taking our one massive web, we have the largest men's discipleship website in the world. Too many pages, so he's been breaking that down into smaller websites over the last couple of years.

Brian, with the help of some other people, has led this initiative and taken all of the archives of the Bible studies and put them on YouTube. We now have a YouTube channel. This goes out on YouTube every week, which makes it much more readily accessible. He put together a website just for the Bible study. The Bible study now has its own website: mimbiblestudy.org. We have a place on the website to donate, but a couple weeks ago Brian decided to try a popup, drawing people's attention to the fact that there are 6,000 downloads of this Bible study every week all over the world, and hundreds of groups going on, don't know how many, and encouraging people to make a donation, or consider making a donation.

For example, it takes about roughly \$2,500 a week to publish this Bible study around the world. Well, we've had a very difficult time getting donors to fund the Bible study, because what they will say is that "We don't feel like we should have to be funding the online Bible study because those are men who should be paying for the ministry that they're receiving. They're getting the benefit of it, they should be paying for it." They point out, "You're not ministering to starving children in Africa. You're ministering to men who ought to be able to pay for it." We've had a very difficult time funding this Bible study, although obviously we continue to do it.

This week, we had our first significant online donation ever. Somebody out there in cyberspace donated \$1,000 online this week to the Bible study. I was encouraged by that. It's progress. I would just mention to those of you who are online to check that out and consider that. Pray about that. I really like the internal logic of people who are receiving the benefit of the ministry should be paying for it does make a lot of sense, so I ask you to give that some consideration. Pretty cool, \$1,000 online the first time ever. That was really great.

What's that? Makes you want to put up a website, yeah for \$1,000 yeah that's a big deal. I could understand why you'd want to do that. Oh boy, you're really going to need this lesson today, buddy.

All right, so Journey to Biblical Manhood, we're moving into challenge number four: fathering. Fathering. How many of you are fathers? Almost everybody. How many of you are grandfathers? Quite a few of you. How many of you are hoping or planning to have more children? Raise your hands. A few of you, or have children who are expecting to have additional children, raise your hands. All right, so this is really for all of us who have children and grandchildren that we love.

If your children are doing well, all of your other problems will fit into a thimble. If your children are not doing well, it will permeate into every aspect of your life. It's said that men compartmentalize, women don't, but if your children are having children you will become a woman. It will affect everything you do. Fathering is a very significant area. On this Journey to Biblical Manhood, which is a journey to become a disciple of Jesus, increasingly spiritually mature in Christ, there is nothing that could be more dear to our hearts than how to father our children.

Now the first thing we want to look at in this challenge are the faith and life objectives. You have cards on the table, so it should be online downloadable. We won't allow the responsibilities of fathering and mentoring to be defined by our culture, rather at the end of this leg of the journey, three things. I'll understand how to disciple children and grandchildren to love God and others rather than fathering for performance. That's the head. I will have made discipling my children, grandchildren or mentoree a top priority in my life. That's for the heart. Then for the hands: I will encourage and pray for my children, grandchildren or mentoree every day.

For this first message, the title of the message is: Fathering the Heart Trounces Fathering to Perform. You may think, or you may have thought in the past, I'm sure you don't think still, that you could be a great dad. Who doesn't want to be a great dad? Who doesn't want to be a dad who wins? Everybody wants to win as a dad. You may have thought at some point that you could be a winning dad just because you really, really wanted it, or just because it was really, really important, or just because you really, really loved your kids, but you have long since realized that that is not enough.

I need a volunteer. Kennis, would you be my volunteer? Kennis is a former professional athlete. You can tell me the way he's cut, this piece of granite that he is. Kennis goes 260 pounds, so he's got about 90 pounds on me, but I can kick his butt. Not really. Not in this case. How many of you are former or current professional athletes? How many professional athletes? Raise your hands if you're professionals. All right. How about collegiate athletes? All right, so a lot of very athletic people. You know if you're an athlete that it didn't happen just because you really, really wanted it. You needed to have skill. You needed to have tools in order to be successful as an athlete.

Now, if Kennis weighted 260 pounds and didn't otherwise look like this, he and I work out at the gym. Different parts of the gym. If he was 260 pounds and fat and flabby, I guarantee you that it didn't make any difference how big he is, I could take him because I do have skills. I'm a trained killer. I am, I'm a trained killer. Actually, I know every vulnerable spot on his body. For example, I could just take him out. In fact, I'm just dying to give it a try except it's Kennis, so I'm not going to do that. Oh, and it's a Bible study, so there's that going on.

What if Kennis is standing there and we're getting ready to go at it, what if I go like this? What does that mean? It doesn't mean a thing. No, it doesn't mean a thing because he's 260 pounds and he looks like that. He's going to kill me. Having the skills for fathering, having the skills and the tools for fathering, that's how we're going to win. Thanks, Kennis for being a good sport.

I want to make you a promise that over the next three sessions we're going to talk about how you can absolutely be a winning dad, be a great dad or grandfather, and perhaps even mentor your kids or grandkids in that same way. First thing we need to talk about is the problem that every dad has to address. Proverbs, chapter 22:25 says ... 22:15 says that "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child." Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, that's the core issue. That's the core problem. A few scenarios. Your kids, they wake up on Sunday morning and they don't want to go to church. What do you do about that? Your kids, they don't want to eat broccoli. What do you do about that? Your kids don't want to do homework. What do you do about that? Your kids are beating on each other, they hit each other on the arm and sometimes maybe even leave a bruise. They don't want to go to bed. How do you address these problems, and why are these problems? These are problems because folly is bound up in the heart of a child.

Every one of our children and grandchildren has a dual identity. Because of creation they are a little like a god, and because of the fall they are a little like a devil. They are images of God, but they are also products of the fall. The true heart of your child is that they are an image of God. The false heart of your child, the false heart of your child is that they are a product of the fall. In the grand scheme of things, the role of a father is to help the child who is born into sin and with a heart of folly to mentor and tutor that heart to the true heart that the child has as an image of God. Well, how does God provide to solve this problem? How does God provide to solve this problem?

In 1 Samuel 16:7, it's on your sheet. You can look it up later if you want, but it's the story when Samuel is going out to anoint a king for Israel. He goes to Jesse. Jesse has all these sons. Samuel sees the oldest and he says, "Wow, surely this is the Lord's anointed." He's a good looking, perfect, he looks like Kennis. The Lord says, "No, he's not the one I've appointed." Then he goes to the next son. He says, "No, he's not the one I've appointed either", and so on and so forth until he's gone through all the sons. Samuel says, "Well, don't you have any more kids?" He says, "Well, yeah. I've got this youngest son, David, but he's out doing some other things." "Bring him in." God said, "This is the one that I want you to anoint."

It says in 1 Samuel 16:7, "Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart." Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. We find this incredible clue into how to father our children well in this little story. The idea is that we don't merely look at how the child is behaving at the outward appearance, but we look at the heart. The big idea today in how we get at this, how do we get at looking beyond their outward appearance and at what's going on in their heart, how do we get at that with our kids. We get it through this big idea. It's the father the heart question. What's going on in my child's heart that's making them behave that way, or makes them behave this way? What's going on in the heart of my child that's making them behave this way?

This would be the first question we would be wise in asking when our kids are arguing with each other. I remember our kids used to, when they were teens they were arguing with each other. I just sat down one day and I said, "Look, you guys have to figure this out. Someday your mother and father are not going to be around and there are going to be the two of you. You're on the verge of doing something, creating such a rift between the two of you that you're not going to be liking each other. Someday, you're going to be the only two family members here that we have." When these kinds of things come up you can try to just focus on the behavior, but to father the heart would be to instead ask the question, "What's going on in the heart of my children that's making them behave this way?" Instead of focusing on the behavior, the outward appearance, we focus on the heart. All right?

I want to talk to you then about the two ways that dads approach fathering. The two ways that dads approach fathering. On your tables are some ... I just ended up doing this this morning, so I don't know if this is the best way or not to do it. You've got these sheets. You don't have to write this down. You can pick up one of these sheets on the table. I wanted to just compare to you the difference between fathering to perform and fathering the heart, so that you can have this clear in your mind. This is the big idea in parenting. When you father to perform, you're looking at appearances. That's 1 Samuel 16:7, "Man looks on the outward appearance. God looks on the heart." To father the heart means that you're looking beyond appearance to what's going on in the child's heart.

Fathering to perform focuses on the child's behavior. Many fathers try to get their children to ... "Why should you do this? Because I said so, that's why." How many of you have had that going on to you and from you? The idea of focusing on getting the children to do the right things, but without looking at what's going on in their heart. Yes, you can get your children to conform because you said so, because you have the power to control them for a while, but if you never actually get at what's going on inside their heart, then that behavior will obviously slip away.

Fathering the heart pays attention to both belief and behavior. My wife, Patsy, one day was talking to a ... She has mentored a lot of young moms around this town. She one day was talking to a young mom who was concerned about how she could keep her children off of drugs. In the course of the conversation Patsy said something very interesting. She said, "I am not primarily interested in my children's behavior. My first concern is what's going on in their heart." That's it. That's fathering the heart. My principle concern is not how they're behaving, but my principle first concern is what is it that's going on in their heart.

Do you need to pay attention to behavior? Absolutely you do, but belief determines behavior. Belief determines behavior. Whatever behavior that, and this applies to you too of course, however you are behaving you are acting out something that you believe. We have to get above. Fathering perform focuses on what they do. Fathering the heart focuses more on why they do what they do. Fathering the heart is law, fathering the heart is grace. You can raise your children under grace or law, but grace is better.

If you raise your children under law, forcing them to conform, controlling their behavior without helping them understand why that's going on and understanding what's going on in their heart, you may get them to tow the line until they are old enough that they can get away from you. Then you are very likely not to see much of them ever again. They will be there maybe at Christmas, or they may even be there more often, but in terms of them having a deep, affectionate relationship with you, you can pretty much write that off, unless of course you humble yourself as a reconciliation. By the way, some of you are not the father in this. You're the child in this and you know exactly what I'm talking about because you were

raised under law. When you had the chance to get away, you bolted because your father was a controlling person and didn't have grace.

Freedom? Yeah, within boundaries. Okay, there are boundaries. We're not talking about throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Fathering to perform, you can get your children to behave with enough threats of punishment or promises of reward. You can. You can threaten and promise your kids to get them to do a certain amount of things. Fathering the heart, the method there is asking questions and having discussion. How does a person, if man looks on the outward appearance and God looks on the heart, how can a man find out what's in someone else's heart? Only if that person decides to review what's in their heart. Since folly is bound up in the heart of a child, the child probably can't even talk about, doesn't have the language, doesn't have the structures to talk about what's going on in there, but you, you as the adult in the room can ask questions that help the child to reveal its heart. Okay, and then you can discuss it.

Again, fathering to perform, "Because I said so". Fathering the heart, "Let us reason together. Come, let us reason together." Not that you're going to say that to your child, but that's the biblical idea here. Fathering to perform, what does that do? It perpetuates folly. Why? It doesn't impart the wisdom of the discipling father into the disciplee child. Fathering the heart though does produce wisdom because there's a spiritual transfer, this intergenerational transfer of biblical truth from the father to the child. Then again, the big idea, the father the heart question. What is going on in my child's heart that's making them behave this way? That's the question to ask.

Then let's take a little bit of a look at God's plan to disciple our children. Do that by turning to Psalm chapter 78. Psalm chapter 78, if you would. We'll read together a few verses there. If you're comfortable doing that and can find it, go ahead and do that. Oh, and I never get around to doing this, but I'm going to mention it today. This is the book *The Dad in the Mirror*. Most of this message, I suppose, can be found in this book. For those of you who want to go further in this, or want to buy a book for your kids or whatever, we brought some this morning. I'd encourage you to pick a copy of this book up, "The Dad in the Mirror".

Psalm 78. If folly is how the child's life starts, what determines how it turns out? Well, in Psalm 78, verse one, "My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in parables. I will utter things hidden from of old - things we have heard and known, things our fathers have told us." I'm a spiritual man, I'm going to tell you spiritual things, because these are things that our fathers have told us. Where did this knowledge come from that we have? Well, it either came from our fathers, or surrogates: coaches, teachers, preachers, so forth, or we didn't get it from our fathers because they didn't have it to give to us. Many of you have given it back up to your fathers, but most of the time it's supposed to come down.

That's the way it's supposed to happen, but some of you didn't get it so you started out your life caught in a cycle, in a cycle. You have come to this Bible study and/or other Bible studies because you want to do what? You want to break the cycle. You are breaking the cycle. You have broken the cycle.

Where did this knowledge come from? It came from our fathers. It goes down. Verse four. Now that this knowledge has been passed down here and in other relationships that you have, what will we do with this knowledge? What will we do with this knowledge? What is the purpose of all this knowledge that we gain? "We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy

deeds of the Lord, His power and the wonders He has done." There it is. This is God's plan to disciple our kids.

Why might we not tell the next generation? Let's read on. Verse five "He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children." This is God's plan, is for the fathers to disciple their children. "To teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children." This is God's plan to disciple our children. This is God's plan to help drive out the folly that's bound up in the heart of a child. Verse seven, "Then they would put their trust", why? "Then they would put their trust in God", when we father the heart "they will put their trust in God, and would not forget his deeds, but would keep his commands. They would not be like their forefathers - a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God." This is God's plan for discipleship.

God is in the process. You could see it happening right now in our generation. God is in the process of doing the last verse of the Old Testament. That is, He's turning the hearts of the fathers to the children. You can see, the millennial generation in particular, you can see that God is in the process of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children. Let us rejoice in that, let us be happy in that, let us be glad in that, but let's just not put them out there making the sign of the cross and doing the best they can. Let's make sure that we take on these skills and these tools that are available to us and help every father understand that "you are the plan. You are the plan. You are the plan. You are the plan. You, you, you, you, you, you, you. You are the plan."

The uber starting point for this is to understand the difference between fathering the heart and fathering to perform, and to understand that fathering the heart beats the crap out of fathering to perform. The father to heart question is "What's going on in my child's heart that's making them behave this way?" What's going on in my child's heart that's making them behave this way?

Okay, now we have three questions. I'd like you to take some time, go over those questions. Then aggregate some of your answers. We'll have a little open sharing time at the end, like we do. Do we have any first time visitors with us this morning? If you would raise your hand. Here and here and here and here. Okay. Well, I wonder if you would join me in welcoming these men to the Bible study this morning? So glad to have you. We do have a visitor's table, which I lead. I'd love to have a chance to get to know you a little bit. If you would, I'd like to invite you to join me at this card table in the front right hand corner. Thanks. Let's break for the tables for discussion. I'll give you a two-minute warning.

Okay, checkmate king two. This is white rook over. Checkmate King two, this is white rook, over. Breaker one-nine. Breaker one-nine. Okay, let's go ahead and take a look at these questions together. Which of these two fathering approaches that we've discussed today did you dad or surrogate use, and how has that influenced you? What kinds of answers did you guys come up with that you would like to share? Are you embarrassed by having been a performer professional athlete? Yeah. Were you here when I asked all former professional athletes or professional athletes to raise their hands? What'd he say? Taking the fifth. Yeah, he's a running back for the Jets for crying out loud.

Okay, question number one. Which of the two fathering approaches? Anybody? Too vulnerable? Rick. Stand up please and project.

Rick: Yeah, my dad raised me performance side. We were a military family, very regimented. It wasn't a bad thing, but he taught me when to be on time and how to work. It was very regimented from a military point of view.

Patrick Morley: Military, that's an interesting way of putting it. Thank you, Rick. Okay, who else? Yes, John.

John: From time to time the point was made here that dads use both approaches depending on the age and the situation. Younger, more domineering. As we got older, gave us more chances to make our own choices.

Patrick Morley: Mm-hmm (affirmative), and how mad you are at the child.

John: Right.

Patrick Morley: Yeah. That's good.

Speaker 4: You also have to take in the personality of your child.

Patrick Morley: The personality of the child, yeah. Right.

Speaker 4: Some need to get slapped up the head [crosstalk 00:33:50] get their attention. The other one, you look at them the wrong way and they just melt.

Patrick Morley: That's so wise. I gave an illustration years ago. I forgot about it. I came up with this idea that this father had these seven children and he took them all into a candy store. All seven kids did seven different things. Then of course you had to interact with each child based on exactly what you're saying, that each child has its own personality. This is a very helpful insight.

Okay, anybody else on that one? All right, second question. How would you answer the question, "so what?" For the points made in each one of these three verses – first is that folly is bound up in the heart of the child. What's the so what? So what, folly is bound up in the heart of a child. So what? What'd you come up with? Do I need to simplify these questions? Sydney.

Sydney: We had the answer discipline is good, but don't do it out of anger.

Patrick Morley: That's good. Okay, so that's a nice way of saying the father the heart idea, another way of saying it really. Say it again.

Sydney: Discipline is good, but don't do it out of anger.

Patrick Morley: Okay. Discipline is good, but don't do it out of anger. We're not saying don't discipline your children. Yeah. When you do get angry, the tendency is to not look at what's going on in the heart. Okay. How about in the ... Oh, it should be 1 Samuel 16:7. You knew that though. "Man looks on the outward appearance. God looks on the heart." With regard to this fathering thing, so what? What's the so what on that? What are some of the possible answers? Dream. Well, if man looks on the outward appearance and God looks on the heart, one so what is that we should be looking on the heart too,

trying to look on the heart. It's very difficult to do, right? What are some of the other thoughts that came to mind? Yes, David.

Speaker 6: I think your observation in Malachi, which you don't have up there which is really terrific, "They will restore the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers", this is a problem that has been here forever. We were just commenting on this is an old issue that really needs to be taught from the pulpit – it doesn't get talked about very often.

Patrick Morley: Yeah, yeah, good. That's good. Thank you, and thank you for the encouragement. Yes, over here.

Speaker 7: Where looking at the hearts of the children we get caught in the cycle if we're looking at their performance, we're measuring our performance. If we're going to look at their heart, we better look at our heart in order to break the cycle like John pointed out to us. There's a cycle, we have to break it. How do you do that? Look at your own heart first.

Patrick Morley: Oh, this is very good. This is very good. This is next week's message here. No, I mean it could be. It's not going to be. It could be, but the idea that a lot of times what we are disciplining in our children are the things that we don't like in us. Yes?

Speaker 8: Your children are always watching. It's critical that you demonstrate character. That is touch their heart.

Patrick Morley: Children are always watching. Demonstrate character. Apparently, that has been one of your lifelong things because you got to see as kids. Okay, Psalm 78, anything else for Samuel? Yeah.

Speaker 9: Many years ago, I read a tremendous book by Steve Farrar called Point Man. It literally changed my life and the lives of my family because I understood some of the things that I had learned that were bad, I could fix in my children by breaking the cycle. It's really effective.

Patrick Morley: Yeah. That's a great book, by the way. Steve is a good friend of mine. What is one way you could father the hearts of your children this week, and what would that be? We got time for one answer. I'm going to have to draw straws. Somebody? Do you enjoy this time? Is this time good? Do you want to continue doing this? How many of you would like to go back to the old format?

Speaker 10: I think it has a lot of value. The format, we were just talking about this, that it does allow the guys to really kind of share what's going on besides not the message but getting into the message how it applies to them, and then certainly more time also in prayer at the end, not cutting into that as much.

Patrick Morley: All right, well let's wrap it up. It's 8:00. For those of you who are online, I hope you have enjoyed your discussion. Bottom line, we had a very robust discussion here on a couple of these questions today and some healthy insights, and I hope you have too.

Let's pray. Our dearest Father, you are our Father and we would love to be as good to our kids as you are to us. Lord, would you come now through your Holy Spirit into our hearts and tutor our hearts with your message from today and show us our next right steps. Then give us not only the desire, but the

power to do it. Philippians 2:13, you are working in us both to will, or to desire, and to do of your good will. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you. See you next week.