

“THE HAPPY DAD!”

by Rom A. Pegram (6/17/18)

When I was a teenager, in particular, I had a choice of how I was going to view and treat my parents. Unfortunately, it was not always a pretty picture...

There was a period of time, during my teenage years, where my mother and I *were not getting along!* To let you in on a little secret, basically—when I was younger—I was an angry kid; and terribly *sarcastic*. Did I mention that before? (*Sarcasm, of course, has been called anger’s ugly cousin ... so it kind of makes sense.*) I was so sarcastic to my mother, so disrespectful, and—in all honesty—so mean to her at times ... that the situation finally came to a head one day...

My father had always been the ‘disciplinarian’ in the family—for as long as I could remember. At one point in time, he worked for the Wesleyan Church—the church he’d grown up in. And he travelled a lot for his job. And, I remember waiting for him to get home from his trips ... so that my older brother and I could line up outside of his office and take turns getting our punishment for whatever we’d done while he was away. This was a normal occurrence...

Anyway, my father—in the midst of my struggles with my mother (my perspective)—sat me down one day and told me: “Rom, I understand that your mother and you aren’t getting along; it’s just not working out. So, I need to tell you ... if things don’t straighten out soon, either your mother is going to leave ... or you’re going to leave ... AND YOUR MOTHER’S NOT GOING TO LEAVE!” The LAW had been laid down...

Folks, it didn’t take me too long to realize that a healthy respect (fear) for the one who could bring various forms of misery to my life ... was a *good thing!* I didn’t want to be a miserable teenager; I wanted to be a happy teenager...

And, today, I’m kind of the same way! I don’t want to be a miserable dad or granddad; I want to be a happy dad/granddad... How ‘bout you fathers here today? What kind of a dad do you want to be? God’s word has some great advice for us today; just listen (Psalm 128, TEV)...

“Happy [blessed] are those who obey the LORD, who live by his commands. ² Your work will provide for your needs; you will be happy and prosperous. ³ Your wife will be like a *fruitful vine* in your home, and your children will be like *young olive trees* around your table. ⁴ A man who obeys the LORD will surely be blessed like this. ⁵ May the LORD bless you from Zion! May you see Jerusalem prosper all the days of your life! ⁶ May you live to see your grandchildren! Peace be with Israel!”

This psalm is often referred to as ‘the marriage prayer’ because it was often sung at Israelite weddings. The idea, of course, is that God will reward your devotion to him with inner peace...

And, I do believe that is something that every dad desires—some inner peace in their lives. Every dad desires happiness, too; most people spend a lifetime seeking it! There’s an old country song that tells us, “We look for love (happiness) in all the wrong places....” The psalmist, today, is letting us know *the right place to look for it!* Father’s

(and mother's) need to be happy ... and then they'll have a happy home... If we learn to do things God's way, here's what we can expect: This scripture begins by talking about...

THE BLESSING WE NEED... Verse one tells us, "Happy [blessed] are those who obey the LORD, who live by his commands." What God is promising us, in today's scripture, is that *if we choose* (and it is our choice) *to live by God's commands*—to be obedient in that, *we'll be happy* (blessed) *in our lives*—what we're all looking for... "Happy are those who ... live by [God's] commands." *Fathers: you need to be students of the Word!* You can't live by God's commands ... or have a reverence for God's ways, if you don't know them; you've got to have a working knowledge of God's ways first... So, don't let your families down; *know God's word ... and you get to know God!*

For years while our kids were growing up, on the front of our refrigerator was one of those magnets with a cute little saying on it that said: "When MAMA ain't happy, ain't NOBODY happy!" Sometimes, I think we've got that turned around; who makes Mom happy? Dad, primarily...

So, if you as a dad are happy, not only will you be happy, *you will be the SOURCE of your home's happiness*... Father's, you are the key; don't blame your wife if your home is not as happy as it should be! Obedience to God's ways are the key ... and you need to lead in this in your home! AND IF YOU DO, here's the blessing you'll receive...

THE BLESSING WE RECEIVE... Verses 2-4 say, "Your work will provide for your needs; you will be happy and prosperous. ³ Your wife will be like *a fruitful vine* in your home, and your children will be like *young olive trees* around your table. ⁴ A man who obeys the LORD will surely be blessed like this."

FIRST, we will receive the blessing of prosperity—your needs will be met ... in other words, the results of your hard work in life will be enjoyed in the midst of family...

What comes to my mind when I think of V. 2 is the old Norman Rockwell painting of a family gathered for Thanksgiving dinner. The great turkey is presented to the table before 3 generations seated there. All faces are smiling with a sense of well-being; the family members enjoy the labor of their hands...

What a blessing the gift of family is ... from God. This is a part of the blessing we'll receive...

SECOND, we'll receive the blessing of a helpmate in life—like *a fruitful vine*... Many children were a blessing in the psalmist's day. And, I dare say ... we are blessed today by all the incredible gifts our wives bring to our homes (and you can fill in the blanks) ... *if we'll just take the time to realize it!*

THIRD, we'll receive the blessing of children... Children are a blessing when they are younger. I always teased that ... I loved my children when they got old enough to talk to

me ... and converse like real human beings; but, there's a real satisfaction that comes along with having even an infant in the household ... and knowing God has entrusted this life to you...

Children are a blessing when they are young adults... They provide: a source of labor (many hands working together—Josh and the old Ariens snowblower) and the carrying on of the bloodline...

Children are also a blessing when they get older ... and we get older, too... I've told Jane more than once, recently ... we'd better be kind to our kids; we'll probably be under their care someday (they'll be picking out our nursing home, etc.)...

Folks, it was at that point that I had to make a choice—when my father said, “Either your mother's going to leave ... or you're going to leave ... and YOUR MOTHER'S NOT GOING TO LEAVE!” Either I was going to have a healthy fear of my father ... or I wasn't. Either I was going to do things his way ... or it would be the highway...

Now, you'd think that I'd have been miserable living by *his* rules ... and doing things *his* way ... but, I've got to tell you: *It was the smartest move I ever made—to decide to do things Dad's way!* Just so you know, *things* (Rom) *straightened out* ... and life was so much better after that! You see, I suddenly realized (after the threat of harm to my lifestyle—being kicked out) that not only was mine 'a dad of discipline,' but he was also 'a dad of grace' ... who loved me very, very much ... and wanted me to learn how to act right—to respect others ... beginning at home. You might expect the relationship I had with my father might have been one of oppression ... but, instead, I found it to be one of happiness—downright JOY, after I'd learned to have a healthy respect (fear) for my father...

Dads, in particular today, that's all God is asking of us—to learn to walk in *his* ways ... and to live by *his* rules for life... My hunch is that, as we do, we too will learn that having a healthy respect (fear) for God ... and doing things his way ... will result in *a joy-filled life!* We'll learn how to be 'happy dads' as we make the right choice to *know* God ... and to *follow* God ... in all that we do!

Do you want to be a 'happy dad' today? Walk with God; live by his commands. Obedience is the key—total obedience to all God guides you in! **The obedient dad ... is the happy dad!** And along with that comes an incredibly blessed or happy life; let me pronounce God's blessing on you today (vv. 5-6 Rominized)...

**May the Lord bless you in this country you live in...
And see his goodness in all the days of your life.
And, by your obedience to God...
May you be blessed by living to see your generations to come...
And by the peace God offers you! [Amen.]**