

## **LIFE Group Leader Handout**

Father's Day—June 19, 2016

### **Disciple Making—Home Edition**

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#### **Scripture—Matthew 4:21-22**

*[21] And going on from there he (Jesus) saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. [22] Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.*

**Main Idea—Zebedee shows good fathering practices. If we emulate them—we will be blessed**

Zebedee, the father of the apostles James and John:

- was with them—he could have taken it easy, or let them take it easy. They were working alongside one another.
- looked ahead with them—mending their nets was not for today for for tomorrow's successful fishing.
- Released them to God's greater vision—which took James and John far from Galilee. James was beheaded, John tortured and exiled.

#### **Application—**

- What ideas for fathering were learned or reinforced from this message?
- If you are a dad, how is your fathering similar to that of your father? How does it differ?
- What are the key influencers on your fathering these days?
- Is God using you to be a role model and mentor for someone other than your biological children?

Father's Day thoughts on reverse:

## **The Two Words Fathers Should Say to Their Children**

June 17, 2016

“Watch me, dad. Watch me.”

There are few imperatives a father hears more often from his children than “watch me.” It’s a plea for us to recognize that whatever our son or daughter is doing — catching a ball, jumping off a diving board — is worthy of our full attention. They know we are often busy, often distracted and they want, at least for a moment, for us to truly see them. By seeing them in action, they believe, we’ll appreciate them even more.

We can learn a valuable lesson from their example: If we want our children to develop godly habits we need to imitate them by saying, “Watch me.”

“Watch me” was the command the Apostle Paul gave to his own spiritual children. As he told the church at Corinth, “for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me” (1 Cor. 4:15-16). He also told them, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). Paul repeated this admonition several times to the various people and churches to which he served as a spiritual father (Phil. 3:17, Phil 4:9, 2 Thess. 3:7-9, 2 Tim. 3:10-11).

We have a duty to follow Paul’s example with our own children. As theologian D.A. Carson says, “Do you ever say to a young Christian, ‘Do you want to know what Christianity is like? Watch me!’ If you never do, you are unbiblical.”

Here are three ways your own spiritual habits can be used as a model for your children:

### **Be “Watch-Worthy”**

Every day we are becoming either more like Jesus or less like him. Which direction are you headed in today? Because your children are watching you, that is also the direction you are leading them.

Paul was able to say “follow my example” because he was worthy of imitation. And he was worthy of imitating because he was himself committed to imitating Christ.

If we want to be similarly “watch-worthy” we must dedicate ourselves to developing a broad range of godly habits. We must practice the core spiritual disciplines of prayer and intake of Scripture. But we should also be engaged in service and hospitality, evangelism and self-reflection, character formation and developing wisdom, etc. And, above all, we must daily learn to trust and obey God in all things.

These are not practices that come naturally to us. Developing godly habits that lead us to become like Christ requires vigilance and effort. It requires setting aside the necessary time and energy and finding trustworthy resources. The task also obligates us to seek out mature Christians who we ourselves can imitate. If we are to be “watch-worthy” dads for our children we need to model our own behavior on imitation worthy spiritual fathers.

Let them see you in action

When do your children see you pray or read Scripture? Do they only see you bow your head to say grace at the dinner table? Do they only see you open your Bible in the Sunday morning church service? Are all your other times of prayer and devotion done behind the closed door of your office or bedroom? If so, then your children may assume such spiritual disciplines are to be practiced alone and in private.

Find ways to let them see you in talking to the Father and engaging with his Word. And welcome their interruptions. Don’t be dismissive when they ask what you are reading. Explain to them — in language they can understand — what you are learning about God and why it’s important to you.

### **Love Their Mothers**

We live in a broken world and many of us live in broken families. But if you are blessed to be married to the mother of your children, show them what it means to be a godly husband.

The most important way a husband can love his wife like Christ loved the church is to sacrifice himself for her sake. We are also called to model and channel the love of Christ by leading our wives into holiness. A husband should therefore forgive, pray for, and gently encourage his wife to engage in disciplines that lead to her sanctification.

There is no relationship that our children will observe more closely than our marriage. Having them see how we have a Christ-like love for their mother is a powerful example of how they too should love others.