

Fathers as Prophets, Priests, and Kings

Joshua 24:14-15

As our culture continues to spiral downward into greater disorder, we as men must ensure that we are attending to our own households. With so much happening outside our walls, the temptation exists to neglect what happens within them—to ignore what is happening and hope it will all just go away.

Men, we must realize that our homes are the target of Satan and his followers. The Christian household, in glad submission to God's design, has been secularism's target all along; it's the woke cultures target because it is following and preaching the gospel of Marxism: it's been Satan's target along. Men, our churches will be strengthened, and the trajectory of culture helped, when more of us resolve with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

We should heed the prophetic voice of Jeremiah: "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it and find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16). Progress, for us, will look like a return to an ancient path: the path of rebuilding a spirit of worship in our homes, of reclaiming and defending the Christian household (marriage and the family). It will be godly men, the men of God, who will lead the way.

As for My House

Men, no one influences the spiritual climate of our homes like we do. Our goal is to lead our families in a way worthy of God. Our wives and children have been put under our care. It is our responsibility to lead them, to fight for them.

We will use the classic categories applied to Christ as you heard in the Heidelberg Catechism, Q and A 31: *prophet, priest, and king*. We are prophets who speak the word over our households; priests who give ourselves to intercessory prayer, speaking to God on behalf of our loved ones; and kings who govern, defend, and provide for them.

PROPHET

As prophets in our homes, we have the great privilege to speak the words of God to our family. We are spiritual shepherds. We speak to exhort, encourage, and charge our children to a life worthy of God. Paul recognizes this when he says, "Like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12). We are to exhort and encourage. This extends to our wives as well, as God charges us to love her like Christ did his church, washing her with the word (Ephesians 5:25-27).

PRIEST

As priests in our homes, we are called to intercede for our family before God. Whether before them or in the secret place, we get the high privilege to labor in prayer to God on behalf of our children.

KING

God has firmly written into the nature of every man to lead, provide for, and defend those in his charge. As societies descend into ungodliness, this is the last of the three categories to depart. It is a groveling existence for any man — Christian or non-Christian — to abdicate his kingly duties; indeed, "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8).

Though under attack from all sides, the man, as head, makes decisions for his family (both popular and unpopular). Because he loves those affected by his choices, he considers their perspective before making that decision. He does not micromanage, but he does lead. He leads his children and his wife as he follows Christ, his head (1 Corinthians 11:3). Mature masculinity governs its household well (1 Timothy 3:4).

He also leads in ways many kings of the world, untutored in the lordship of Christ, wouldn't dare. He doesn't just take up the privileges of authority, but its responsibilities, bending low to carry physical, emotional, and spiritual burdens for the family, and doing so with joy. His sacrifice extends, if it is necessary, even to a cross in the imitation of his Savior. And he leads his family in other unflattering tasks such as confession and repentance. His glorious crown is one of thorns.

Three Men in One

Considering these categories, I find it all too easy to play to my strengths and avoid the discomfort of being seen as weak in the other areas. Whether we want to admit it or not, men, those around us are affected when we are weak in any of these three callings. None can be safely neglected.

Word to Prophets

What happens when we speak God's word to our families as prophets, but do not take up the mantle of king or priest? We lose spiritual power and respect in the home.

First, if we are prophets only, we will lie in danger of becoming a teacher lacking *unction*. The word of God will not return void, yet do not forget, "The kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power" (1 Corinthians 4:20). Second, we will risk not being taken seriously in the home. If we do not make decisions to govern well on behalf of the family, how can we really oversee souls? "If someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?" (1 Timothy 3:4-5).

Word to Priests

What happens when we pray much, but fail to lead and instruct? If we seek only to bless them with our private and/or public prayers, will we not soon find our prayers becoming shallower and our exhortations weaker (if we attempt them at all). Would we be a man "praying at all times in the Spirit," yet stripped of the Spirit's sword (Ephesians 6:17-18)?

And if we neglect governing, perhaps we will fail to see how we can be the extension of God's arm in our family beyond prayer. Their concerns are our prayerful and practical concerns. We do not send them off to be warmed and filled elsewhere, but we pray and then turn to do what we can for them.

Word to Kings

What happens when we serve as king, but not as prophet or priest? Ours will be a spiritually impoverished household. For all our earthly forethought and provision, we will have left those under our care exposed to unseen foes — the most dangerous enemies — and failed to fill their plates with what Jesus calls "the good portion" (Luke 10:42).

If we are not given to prayer and God's word, our self-resolve will grow thin, our strength will fail, for "even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted" (Isaiah 40:30). We will not know what it is to "mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31) because we won't wait on the Lord, nor cry out like that king of old, "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you" (2 Chronicles 20:12). We will grow in stature in our family's eyes and be kings worthy of the name.

Of Prophets, Priests, and Kings

Acting as prophet, priest, and king in our homes is a simple way to consider what it means to be a Christlike head of the household. We imitate (not replace) Christ, who is our mediating Prophet after Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15), our Great High Priest who intercedes for us (Hebrews 4:14-16), and our Anointed King of Psalm 2.

Suggestion for you to fulfill these three offices? Family worship. Spend ten minutes a day with your family praying, reading the Scriptures, discussing what you read, sharing your lives, and then praying again. You will not do these three perfectly, but your attempt and consistency speaks to your children.