

ROYAL ADVICE FROM FATHER TO SON

Although Father's Day is two weeks from now, I want to include in this repertoire of "Famous Stories of the Bible" a message that is applicable to dads and their families. This is the first time in the 34 years of my pastorate I have not been present to preach the Father's Day message. My daughter, Heather and her husband have requested that I speak at their church, Second Baptist Church of Festus, MO. We are so very honored to have in my place preaching on Father's Day morning and night a prince among preachers: Dr. Raymond Barber and his precious wife. I know he will have something very special for all of our wonderful flock at Christchurch.

Today I want to focus on these final admonitions of King David to the next king, his son Solomon. I believe we can all profit from these words.

1. A royal life recognizes God as their Creator.

II Samuel 23:1, *"Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel...."* David recognized it was God who raised him up and he is admonishing Solomon to allow God to raise him (Solomon) up as well. In the early part of Solomon's career he followed his father's advice and recognizes God as his Supreme Source when he said, *"Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?"* (II Chronicles 1:10). Solomon said at this same time in I Kings 3:7b, 9: *"...I am but a little child: I know not...Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"* It is death to any form of leadership we would desire when we lose glimpse that it is God that made us who we are. Samuel espoused this truth to Saul in I Samuel 15:17, *"And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?"* The psalmist said, *"Know ye that the LORD he*

is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture” (Psalm 100:3).

The Bible tells us, *“For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another” (Psalm 75:6,7).* By the way, the Bible says that Mount Zion, the city of the great King is on the *“sides of the north” (Psalm 48:2).* In essence, promotion comes from Heaven!

2. A royal life is a justified life.

II Samuel 23:3a: *“The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just....”*

First of all, a person needs to be justified before God. *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).* *“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28).* Secondly, a person needs to be justified before men. The Bible says, *“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:24).* There is no contradiction here, because when a person is justified by the grace and mercy of God, he is operating in that same mercy and grace that saved him. He is living a life that says, *“God is real”* before the world. When the Bible says, *“Ye see then...” (James 2:24a),* it is saying the world doesn’t believe it until they see the faith lived out in us!

3. A royal life is one lived in the fear of God.

II Samuel 23:3b: *“...ruling in the fear of God.”* Living in the fear of God gives credibility to your leadership. The Bible says, *“Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long” (Proverbs 23:17).* Living in the fear of God is living in the awe and full respect God is due. It is also living in trepidation if we don’t obey Him. Without the fear of the Lord, we will be bereft of wisdom and knowledge (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 9:10; Proverbs 1:7).

The puritan John Brown said, *“The fear of the Lord is when God's smile is our greatest delight and His frown is our greatest dread.”*

4. A royal Life is one used to the maximum because it is involved with sin to the minimum.

II Samuel 23:4a,b: *"And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds..."* In the morning of our life we should be holy and pure before God. Don't believe the lie of the Devil that says that every young person must sow his or her wild oats. The Bible says, *"For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind..."* (Hosea 8:7). *"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting"* (Galatians 6:8). God uses people who keep themselves clean: *"Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully"* (Psalm 24:3,4). *"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts..."* (II Timothy 2:21,22a). Caving into youthful lusts jeopardizes the usability factor that God is going to be able to work in your life. Every year, every month, every day, every hour not given over to the Lord is wasted. Caleb said, *"...I wholly followed the LORD my God."* (Joshua 14:8). *"It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth"* (Lamentations 3:27). I wonder if the words of his father David were reflecting in his mind when Solomon penned these words in the final chapter of his life, *"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them"* (Eccl. 12:1).

5. A royal life is constantly being refreshed by God.

II Samuel 23:4, *"And he shall be...as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."* The infilling of God's Spirit into our life is symbolized in more than one way; one of my favorite ways is when God likens us to the fresh and abundant growth that comes from the rain of His righteousness upon us. *"Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you"* (Hosea 10:12).

Too often we rely on the best we can do when God is wanting to show us the best that He can, and will, do through us if we rely on Him. When we live clean and rely on God's power and not our own, He supersedes anything and everything we can do. *"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us"* (Ephesians 3:20). In Luke 5:5b, Peter said to Jesus, *"...Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing..."* It will make for a lonely and dark night

with empty nets in the morning if Jesus is not in the boat. Once Jesus entered the boat of Simon Peter everything changed. After they obeyed Jesus and launched out into the deep, there were so many fish caught that their nets began to break and the ships begin to sink!

I encourage the fathers, like David to encourage their children to begin to seek God early and may the children follow a pattern for the rest of their lives that will keep them always in the constant state of refreshment.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, circular initial "J" and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.