

Men on Assignment From Heaven

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[0:00] Fathers are men on assignment. Dads, the God of heaven, has assigned to you the important task of bringing up your children.

! Children do not arrive fully assembled and ready to stand on their own in the world. Rather, they arrive like the grill that your wife brought home from the store in a box with those three words. Some assembly required. And how? And so it is with your children. No small work is needed to be done before those children are ready to go out into the world and stand on their own.

That is the goal in bringing up our children. And fathers, God has given you and has given me the assignment to prepare them for life in the world.

Now, God knows how difficult this assignment is. And so He's given us everything that we need to accomplish it. He's given you clear instructions in the Bible and we're going to look at some of those this morning.

[1:15] He has given us His own example to follow as we've been hearing in the worship that He Himself is a father with many children. And if you're one of those children, then you've been on the receiving end of much of His fathering.

And so you can learn from Him, the perfect Father. And if you are a believing Father, then He's also given you the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, to live inside of you, to empower you, to be able to put His instructions into practice, to enable you to be able to follow His example and to give you all the wisdom, patience, and love that you need to do your assignment.

And then He's even given you a suitable helper in your wife. And that is a tremendous resource for you.

So all of this together shows us that God's serious about this assignment that He's given to you fathers. He expects it to be done and done well.

And we see that in all that He's provided for us to do it. So we're going to look this morning at a few instructions that spell out further what this assignment is from our God.

[2:34] And our key text is Ephesians 6.4. And fathers, it's got our names all over it. It starts out, Now, fathers, fathers, do not exasperate your children.

Instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Now, He's just told children in verse 1 to obey their parents and told them to honor their father and mother.

Parents, plural, father and mother. But when, as soon as He's told children to obey them, He turns and He says, fathers. He doesn't say parents. He doesn't say fathers and mothers.

He says fathers. And surely mothers are included and implied. But He's showing that this is peculiarly the responsibility of fathers.

Yes, God's given you a helper. Yes, you need her. Yes, you must use her in this task. But you can't abdicate your responsibility and hand it all off to her.

[3:34] Fathers is the word. Now, the text easily divides itself into two parts. What we are not to do and what we are to do. And He starts first with what we're not to do.

Fathers, do not exasperate your children. Now, that's as much a command as do not commit adultery. Do not do this.

Do not do that. Do not exasperate your children. Do we understand what it means? Are we serious about obeying it? Well, some of the other translations may be helpful.

Do not provoke them to anger. So you've come to somebody's house and they've got a cat. And the cat comes up and sniffs you. And you're sitting there flicking his nose with your finger.

And it's taking it about five times and suddenly scratches your face. You provoked it to anger.

Fathers, don't do that to your children.

[4:36] Or, as another translation says, do not goad them to resentment. The parallel passage to the Colossians reads, Fathers, do not embitter your children so that they lose heart or become discouraged, exasperated.

Now, when this was first written by Paul to the Ephesians, such a command would have been revolutionary. Fathers in first century Roman Empire did pretty much whatever they liked to their children.

A letter from that period shows that fathers had absolute rights over them and exercised them at will. A man named Hilarion was working in Alexandria. And he wrote home to his wife, Alice, saying that he would not be coming home soon.

And if the baby were born before he got back, he wanted her to follow these instructions. If it is a boy, she should keep it. If it is a girl, she should throw it away.

Fathers were used to doing whatever they pleased with their children, whatever that might mean for the children. But now and here, fathers are being commanded to not so much as provoke them to anger.

[6:06] They must think before they do something to their children. Is this in their best interest? They must think how their treatment of them will affect them emotionally and govern their treatment of them accordingly.

And do whatever was calculated, and never to do what was calculated to provoke them to anger, resentment, and losing heart. That was revolutionary in the first century.

And it shows God's loving concern for children. Throughout this whole series of relationships in Ephesians 5 and 6, we see that there is one party in the relationship that is subordinate to and in submission to the others.

You've got wives submitting to husbands, children obeying parents, and workers or slaves obeying their masters.

And in each, God has a word to the one in the subordinate submissive position first. But no sooner does he speak to them that he always speaks to the one to whom they are submissive.

[7:19] Lest their authority become usurped, or not be usurped, but goes to their head, and they become a domineering husband. So the husbands are told, now you make sure you love your wife and give yourself up for her.

And the masters are told, remember you've got a master in heaven. You treat your slaves with respect. And so after telling children, you obey your parents, honor your father and mother, he right away says, and you fathers, you make sure you don't exasperate your children.

You see God's concern for the weak, for those who are in submission to authority. He does not want tyrannical husbands, oppressive bosses, exasperating fathers.

Yes, fathers, God requires children to obey you, but you must not provoke them to anger, bitterness, and losing heart in the things that you demand of them.

Now there's many ways that we can do that. That's the bad news of this whole thing. There's many ways that we can do that. Too many rules will do that.

[8:33] Rules that are unreasonable or too strict. Saying no to everything they ask. Having too high of expectations so that whatever they do just never pleases us.

Not enough encouragement and praise, only correction and criticism. Discipline that's unfair or that's inconsistently applied. Not doing ourselves what we tell them to do.

Hypocrisy. It provokes them to anger. Showing favoritism to one child over another. Verbal abuse. Speaking demeaning words to them.

Putting them down. Calling them names. Physical abuse. I don't mean proper spanking. That's not physical abuse. But hitting them in the face is.

It provokes them to anger. Neglect. Just being too busy for them. Too busy to take an interest in their things. Treating them as interruptions to your life.

[9:35] There are dozens of more ways that we can sinfully provoke our children to anger. And that's where God starts with us. Fathers, don't do that.

Don't do that. Those kinds of things can create between you and your children an adversarial relationship. Where the atmosphere is frozen and bitter.

And where the relationship is shut down. And that is a most serious level to come to. Because it undermines and it undoes all the rest of our fathering.

He's got some things to tell us to do. But that will get us nowhere if we're exasperating them. They won't listen to our instruction. They won't heed our discipline if we are provoking them to anger. So first, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger. One commentator suggested that the reason this word is spoken to fathers is perhaps because fathers are more prone to this sin than mothers.

[10 : 47] Could that be the case? That fathers more than mothers may be provoking them.

Well, we certainly, fathers, must ask ourselves, are there any ways that I am sinfully provoking my children, causing them to lose heart?

Better yet, ask God to show you ways that you may be doing that. Ask your helper, your dear wife, honey, are there ways that I am doing that?

And if you are really a man, ask your son or daughter that. Embrace yourself for the truth. And where it's true, own it.

And ask forgiveness from your child and find forgiveness from God and grace in Him to put your relationship on a different footing.

[11 : 51] How kind of God to want to spare us from ruining our relationships with our own children. To give us this word. to not exasperate them. To not provoke them to anger.

So that's what we're not to do. Now we're told what we are to do. Fathers, do not exasperate your children. Instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Now a lot of ink has been spilled over those two words. Training and instruction. They're almost synonyms. There's perhaps some little distinctions. But you find them used interchangeably in the Scriptures.

Together, they include the whole training and education of children. All that's needed to bring up children. You see that in the text.

Bring them up. In the training and instruction of the Lord. Now notice, it's the training and instruction of the Lord.

[12 : 52] The Lord Jesus has a distinct way to bring up children. And it's different from the world's way. Father's work commanded to raise them God's way using His Word as our text.

And that is such a broad subject that I must narrow down our study this morning to just four points for bringing up children God's way. Number one, love your children's mother.

Indeed, Paul has already established that a few verses earlier when he said in chapter 5 and verse 25, husbands love your wives. Not only does that picture Christ's love for His church and bring glory to God, but that's the best climate for bringing up children God's way.

That is the best climate for them to learn. A home where dad loves mom. Two years ago on the 4th of July, the sports world was rocked by the news of a former NFL quarterback Steve McNair who was found dead.

Shot in the head by his mistress, girlfriend, who then shot herself as well. He was a married man. Days later, I was watching the live footage from the funeral and there were his wife and children.

[14 : 25] The place was crawling with his former football friends and anybody important from the NFL seemed to be there that day. And then the minister said to them all, we don't want the questionable aspects of his death to tarnish this day.

He was a good man and a good father to his children. And I beg to differ. You're not a good father to your children if you are unfaithful to their mother.

It shatters their world. It turns it upside down. It shakes them to the core. It sometimes scars them for life. Few things will more quickly exasperate and provoke your children to anger than unfaithfulness to their mother.

So men, we need to get first things first. Our assignment of fathers begins with being an Ephesians 5.25 husband. Loving our wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Because that creates the climate, the atmosphere in which children thrive. That is the soil in which our instructions and discipline will take root in their lives.

[15 : 57] Today, about half of new marriages fail, leaving all sorts of pain in their wake, the most of which is borne by the children. fathers, what are you doing to prepare your sons to live in that kind of world and to be good husbands faithful to their wives?

Recently, I've been involved in a lot of premarital counseling with engaged couples. I believe it's an important effort to prepare couples for marriage.

We spend some seven meetings together spread out over three months. There are Bible studies, book study, articles read, worksheets filled out, CDs of lectures.

Some of you know what I'm talking about. We meet then to discuss it together, interaction between the couple, observing by me, the pastor. But that's little more than a stopgap measure.

By far the best way for a man to prepare for marriage is to grow up in a home where for 20 or so years, every day, he witnesses and he watches what it means for a man to love his wife as Christ loves the church.

[17:14] There's nothing like that. Nothing holds a candle to that kind of thing. No three-month premarital counseling, no seminar book, or anything is going to compete with that.

Personally witnessing over a long period of time a dad's love for mom. And learning not only from him what to do, but what not to do, and how to react to your own sinful failures as a husband, as a father.

Boys growing up under such fathers receive a heritage worth more than all the shares in the New York Stock Exchange put together. And if by grace they learn from their fathers and marry, someday they'll live to make a woman very happy and will provide an atmosphere for their own children to thrive best in under the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

And God will be greatly glorified. So, to begin fathers, love your children's mother. Secondly, teach your children God's word.

Children do not arrive in this world with all the wisdom they will need for life. They don't know what is best for themselves. They think the five food groups are black candy, white candy, yellow candy, and red candy, and so on.

[18:46] They don't know what is best for them. And fathers, God expects you to teach them, to bring them up in the instruction of the Lord.

And it points to the spoken word. instruction. And notice again, it's the instruction of the Lord. You don't have to come up with your own instruction. He's put it in a manual, in a book, and he's given it to you, and he says, now teach them, teach them, instruct them.

Make sure they're very familiar with the law of God that will one day judge them. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom. Your children need to know what will be on the final test.

Teach them the law of God. The Ten Commandments are an easily memorizable summary of that law. Make sure they memorize that summary and teach them from it.

Hold it up as a mirror in which they can see their own sin, what they look like compared to the holy, holy, holy God. point them continually to the Lord Jesus Christ.

[20:02] The scriptures teach them how to be wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. So tell them of a Savior who has perfectly kept that law and then died for sinners who haven't.

And urge them to trust in that Savior. The history lessons of the Bible will show them God's character in action in relationship to others.

They'll be able to see God's holiness in action, God's faithfulness, God's grace, God's wrath in action.

Make much use of the history sections of your Bible. Introduce them to the real people that you meet in the Bible whose lives portray what truth looks like in everyday life.

Make them familiar with the heroes of the Bible found in Hebrews chapter 11 and elsewhere teach them from their successes and their failures. In Deuteronomy 5, Moses is repeating the Ten Commandments to the second generation Israelites who are now ready to go into the promised land.

[21:11] Remember the first generation that stood at the foot of Mount Sinai and heard God proclaim the law. They have everyone 20 years old and have died and were buried.

Now, this is the second generation and he repeats the Ten Commandments to them in chapter 5 of Deuteronomy. Then those commandments are chiefly what is in view in chapter 6 verses 6 and 7 when he says these commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

Impress them upon your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you get up. Fathers, do you see from that passage that your teaching ministry to your children starts with the Word of God being pressed upon your own heart?

Your own heart. These commandments are to be upon your hearts. They must be there if you are to impress them upon your children's hearts.

You must know the Word if you are to diligently teach it to your children. So I'm asking you, do you know the Word of God better this year than you did last year? Any naughty parts that you didn't understand last year that this year you understand more?

[22:33] You're reading some commentaries, you're asking other people, you're going online and listening to sermons, you're studying the Bible besides just reading it because you want to study it.

It's not just for pastors and Sunday school and Wednesday night teachers to study. No, you need to understand it so you can diligently teach and explain it to your children as you sit at home with them.

Do you have times in your busy schedule when fathers you sit at home with your children with an open Bible and you read and you talk about what God's! has to do with them and their life.

Memorize it, Dads. Hide it in your own heart so that when you walk along the road you can impress it upon your children. You can take advantage of those teachable moments when you don't have the Bible I trust in the wheel in one hand in the steering wheel in the other but you've got it here.

And so as you're driving of those teachable moments and point out lessons from life as you observe it together with your children as you see things that illustrate Bible truths.

[23:56] Dads, are you making good use of the road time that you spend driving with your children? A wise father in Proverbs said, I went past the field of the slugger.

He wasn't driving, he was walking. And he went past the field of the slugger, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment. Thorns had come up everywhere. The ground was covered with weeds.

And the stone wall was in ruins. I applied my heart to what I observed. And I learned a lesson from what I saw.

A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest and poverty will come upon you like a bandit in scarcity like an armed man.

That's the lesson that came as he was walking along the road one day. Dads, don't miss such an opportunity to point out the biblical lesson. What happens to the sluggard?

[25:00] Son, look at that field. That's a total loss. Look at that run down garden. Look at this. learn a lesson, son.

They'll soon, those lessons are right before you and as you're together point them out. When you lie down and when you get up, the text says, bedtimes, lying down times are teachable moments, especially for young children.

It seems that what the writer is, what Moses is saying is that all the day long from rising to bedtime, whether sitting at home or walking along the way, we are to be looking for, on the lookout for, and seizing these teachable moments, opportunities to speak truth into the lives of our children.

So fathers, how much of that did you do this week? They will soon be grown up and gone. You saw them up here.

It wasn't that long ago. They were in the nursery. And they'll be gone and those teachable moments will be greatly reduced. Make the most of them today, lest you be filled with regrets tomorrow.

[26:27] Redeeming the time, redeeming this season of life because the days are evil. You see, the words are to be in your hearts and then impressed on your children.

Now, this whole responsibility of teaching our children the word of God includes, and this word instruction includes warnings. In Psalm 19, David speaks of the ordinances of the Lord in Scripture saying, by them is your servant warned.

And in keeping of them there's a great reward. The word of God includes warnings. And it saves us from a thousand snares of life.

Dad, is there a note of warning in your teaching to your children? I didn't say, is that all it is? But is the note of warning present in your teaching of your children?

This world is a dangerous place to live in, and especially for children to live in. It's like a battlefield strewn with land mines, deceptions, enemies who hate them, and your child must wake his or her way through this killing battlefield.

[27:36] Are you warning them about specific things that will ruin them? Are you pointing out specific temptations and traps that will destroy their lives and damn their souls?

Son, there's a way that seems right to a man. But notice where it leads? To destruction. Destruction.

Warn him. Warn him of those ways. Pity the child who's not being warned about the dangers of life. Who's just left to wander onto the battlefield by himself with his own wisdom.

He's easy prey for the enemy of his soul. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. So warn them, fathers. The book of Proverbs is full of such warnings, isn't it?

Make much use of it. Learn from that father in Proverbs as he puts his arm around his son and says, son, I love you and I want the best for you. But you must know that there are dangers out there in this world that you must watch out for.

[28:44] Let me point some out to you. Bad companions. Bad companions. He who walks with a wise son grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.

You'll pay, son. You'll pay a dear price. And if ever sinners entice you, don't give in to them.

Wisdom will keep you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse.

Beware. Choose your friends wisely. Beware of bad friends. Danger. Warn them. And the immoral woman is out there too.

And the Proverbs are full of specific warnings to the son. How to spot them. The destruction that they bring. Look what happened to the promising career of Samson.

My son, do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths. Many are the victims she's brought down. Her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is the highway to hell leading down to the chambers of death.

[29:52] And dads, I have to ask you as well, do your daughters know what an immoral man looks like? Are you warning her about him? Are you protecting her moral purity as well?

people? And there's the danger of laziness and lack of ease out there, son. Son, young people, this generation of young people is especially prone to the idol of laziness, slothfulness.

All of life is supposed to be fun and games. sin. Oh, son, poverty will come on them like a bandit. Scarcity like an armed man.

Are you warning them about these bandits? About these armed men that will ruin their future? That will make them waste their lives? Are you warning them about the seven things that the Lord hates? They're detestable to him. Proverbs 6 and so on. Don't send them into the war zone of this world without pointed warnings. Specific words of warning.

[31:07] But then again, this instruction of the Lord not only includes warnings, it also includes setting rules, standards. Now, the Bible will not tell you what time your son should go to bed.

The Bible will not tell you how many hours your child should be allowed to spend on Facebook or playing computer games, but you better work out such rules from biblical principles or they will end up wasting their life away.

And the bandit and armed men of poverty will overtake them. You must hammer out with your wife specific rules and standards of what we will wear in this home and will not wear.

standards for dress, for music, for movies, for language, for work, for play, for manners of etiquette.

Dads, if Madonna or Lady Gaga rang your doorbell and there she is dressed in her provocative dress and she says, I'd like to spend the evening with your 16 year old son, you'd say over my dead body and lady doesn't belong to your name.

but I ask, have we not invited her into the living room if we allow our children to listen to her pornographic music?

[32:38] Music, music, is a powerful, perverting influence of the day. And dads, we must carefully monitor music in our homes unless it undermine everything else that we're trying to instill and teach in our children.

Rules must be set and enforced for radio, TV, CD, internet. That's simply part of what it means to father, to bring up children in the 21st century. And I ask you, dads, when's the last time you've listened to your children's music and watched what their eyes are looking at on the internet?

Not because you enjoy the same kind of music they do, but because you've been set as the one who's to set the standard in the home, to protect them from the dangers that would consume them.

Well, that leads us to the third point, and very briefly on this, dads love their mother, teach them the word of God, third discipline your children, along with the rules come rewards for obeying and painful consequences for disobeying.

And parents, excuse me, fathers, we're talking to fathers, without discipline, painful consequences for discipline, all your instruction and all your rules will be completely rendered ineffective.

[34:09] You must have painful consequences. bring them up in the training of the Lord. That same word for training is translated discipline in Hebrews 12, 11, no discipline, no training seems pleasant at the time, but painful.

And if your spanking isn't painful enough to make your baby cry, it's not painful enough yet. It's not pleasant, but painful.

Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Now, we've considered the danger of oppressive fathers and their need to not provoke their children to anger, from Ephesians 6, 4.

Not to be overly severe, but today more and more fathers are erring on the other end of the spectrum and becoming indulgent and not doing anything that might displease the child, not crossing their wills, but pampering them and giving them whatever they demand.

These are the days of the United Nations rights of the children and even corporal punishment is to be outlawed. Well, weak indulgence is to be avoided as much as oppressive harshness.

[35:28] We're to bring them up in the training, the discipline of the Lord, His way, not the world's way. And He uses and teaches the use of the rod for rebellion against authority in our young children.

left to themselves, they'll go astray from the womb, speaking lies. And the Bible says when they do that and when they rebel, they need the strong disciplining hand of father.

Children do not arrive as a blank sheet of paper just waiting on you to write on them that. The Bible says they arrive with folly bound up in their heart already.

folly. And when they express that folly, God's wisdom says you need the rod of reproof, of correction to drive it far from them.

Remember the example of your heavenly father. The heavenly father disciplines those he loves and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son, Hebrews 12, 6.

[36:36] And dad expects you to do the same with your children. And if you love them, you will discipline them. Proverbs 13, 24. He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.

God says you hate any son that you do not discipline. You hate them because by sparing the rod, you are leaving them on the road that leads to destruction uncorrected.

It is not loving to leave a child on a road leading to a cliff without discipline. Well, the cliff is ultimately damnation.

don't spare the rod, dad. It means we must man up, act like men, and do the hard right, and be willing to risk our children's short-term frowns and displeasure and unfriendliness towards us that comes from rebuking and correcting and disciplining them.

That was Eli's failure, wasn't it? His two sons made themselves contemptible and he failed to restrain them. Instead, he offered a mere tap on the hand, a mild, weak rebuke, and it simply greased the slide to their destruction from the hand of the Lord.

[38:04] It's on the record of scriptures as a warning to us dads, lest we ruin our own children. So kids, I ask you, do you have a father who spansks you when you disobey and rebel against mom and dad?

Do you have a father that doesn't let you get away with lying and stealing but brings painful consequences when you do? You are blessed, boy or girl.

Thank God for your daddy. He loves you. He wants to protect you. He wants to spare you from God's greater and eternal punishment for all who rebel against his rules.

And one of those rules is children, obey your parents. And if you just disobey that and get away without painful consequences, you'll keep doing it. And you won't learn that God has a hell for children who disobey their parents and do not repent and trust in the Savior.

So fathers, discipline your children and lastly, pray for them. You see, in prayer we get to bring our children to the Lord like that man in the gospel whose son was demon possessed and he brought his son to Jesus.

[39:19] Well, Jesus isn't here in the flesh or we could bring our children to him. And we would, wouldn't we? Wherever he was, we'd make the trip and get there. Well, we get to go to him in prayer.

And that's where we bring our children for his blessing, through prayer. And we can speak God's word to our children till we're blue in the face, but only he can put his truth on their inward parts. And we can plead with them, but only he can write it on their hearts and give them a mind to delight in it and an appetite to desire it and a will to obey it. We can discipline them, but only God can make that discipline bring about the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

So we add to everything we do in raising our children this, to cry to God, to bless them, and to bless all our efforts at bringing them up.

Children, your father may not be the richest man on the block. He may not drive the hottest car out in the parking lot. He may not be the strongest man in the gym, the funniest man at the party, the most popular man in town.

[40:36] home. But if you have a father who regularly prays for you, you have a rare and precious blessing.

A praying father. And only heaven will tell how many blessings came to you in life in answer to a father's faithful prayers.

Bless God today for a praying dad. An imperfect dad, but a dad who is seeking to love your mother and who is seeking to bring you up in the word of God, who is seeking to be faithful in disciplining you, and who is on his knees before the throne that rules the universe, rules and everything that touches your life, all that concerns you.

Honor your father. Thank God for him today. Children, if even in this lesson to fathers, your own sins have been exposed, you say, yeah, I'm the sinner.

I've not kept the law to obey and honor father. Well, you see, there's a savior for you and the Lord Jesus offers to forgive all your sins.

[42:08] You bring them to him, you confess them to him and ask for his mercy and you'll find it. Fathers, I call on you to embrace afresh this morning your assignment from God and to go about it as a man on a mission.

One that you will give an account of one day. And perhaps you're saying you're too late, pastor. My task is already done and I've failed and I'm left with a lot of regrets.

For the task is almost done. And I've only seen my failures this morning. Well, what do you do with your sinful failures?

Get in line. Come on. God, we all have failed our children. And if it were not for the grace of God, they would be scarred for the rest of their life in every one of our homes.

But what do we do with our failures? We don't excuse them. We bring them to Jesus. We own them and we tell him what we've done and what we've not been and we ask his forgiveness.

[43:15] We seek his pardon. And then we believe the promise that if we confess, he's faithful and just and he'll forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And we come to him not only for pardon, but for power.

To father in a different way. And we ask him, Lord, help me to be that father that we saw outlined in your word this morning.

Grace is in Jesus to enable us to start afresh at building broken down relationships. He's able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.

Do you know why there's grace? Why there's always this second chance? Why there's always reason for hope? Wherever we're at, it's because of a heavenly father who gave up his one and only son and sent him to the cross with our sins.

We might be forgiven and that we might come to know more than our own failures. We might come to know that grace that lives in him, that faithfulness in him. So as we conclude, let's take our grace hymns and sing of this deep, deep love of the father for us.

[44:35] Number three, how deep the father's love for us. How kind beyond all measure. Let's stand as we sing of our heavenly father and of his goodness. I've spoken directly to fathers this morning who are actively engaged in this assignment from heaven.

I've spoken to children to honor their fathers. A lot of you aren't in either of those two categories. wives. I beg your prayers for the fathers of this church.

Your own husband, if he's still involved with heavy duty fathering. Grandparents, you too can instill the word of God in the hearts of your children.

Speak that truth into their lives. You too can pray. You who have already raised yours and they're gone. It's not time to sit back and say, well, I've done my hard work.

Now it's going to be fun to sit back and watch these guys struggle. No, please pray for us who are still involved. Come alongside of us. Pull us aside in the foyer and say, how's it going with fathering?

[45 : 47] Pray with us there. Pray with us in your home. We need help. We need help. And that's the beauty of the church body. We're in this business together for the glory of God.

Let's pray. Oh, our Father in heaven, in singing this hymn, we realize afresh that we have introduced pain into your relationship with your son.

Our sins. Many of those sins have been sins of fathers and children. And how we thank you for a Savior whose righteousness and blood can cover all our sins.

Can teach us your way to live. Oh, come and teach us that lesson today, right now, right here.

Come to our hearts. Open our hearts to receive your word.

Teach us tomorrow morning and the next day and all day. Make us a family of God that seeks to see the children of this church brought up to know you.

[46 : 57] Thank you for our helpers that you've given us, our wives. Thank you for each other. Thank you for older men whose job is for the most part over.

For their encouraging example to us. Ongoing words and prayers. Oh, come and get glory to your great name, Father.

Father, do it in our lives and through us, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.