Fathers Who Fail Can Also Prevail

There’s not many examples of highly functioning, spiritually successful fathers within Scripture

In fact, many of the most significant fathers who were also men of God were deeply flawed and made choices a godly dad should never make

This is not to say these men were failures in every single respect but their irresponsible actions serve as important lessons for how fathers ought not to live out this tremendously vital role

Yes, it goes without saying, no father is perfect

Even the so-called godliest saints from biblical history had significant shortcomings

Why am I spending this amount of time highlighting this?

1 Corinthians 10:11 provides the answer: “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”

Christian fathers need to learn from these examples how not to make the same significant missteps within their families

I’m not emphasizing this to make any father feel like a failure

In fact, my goal is quite opposite

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As we begin examining some examples of father’s within Scripture who had significant flaws, we want to see the silver lining in all of this

By recognizing what we should not be, we will also seek to clearly identify what we should be and most certainly what we can be to the betterment of our children and also, more importantly, to the glory of God

Adam seems to be absent from what transpired between Cain and Abel

Noah got drunk soon after leaving the ark and was indecently exposed before Ham

Abraham made a very poor decision to produce an heir through his Egyptian maidservant Hagar

He later abandoned Hagar and his son Ishmael

Jacob practiced favoritism amongst his twelves sons, showing partiality to Joseph and Benjamin, e.g. the coat of many colours

Moses had two sons, Eliezer and Gershom

They would have had a front row seat to observing their father lead the Israelites through the wilderness

On more than one occasion, they saw Moses lose his temper

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Moses’ lack of self-control had great consequences, preventing him from entering the promised land

Eli the priest was an immorally, enabling father

He permitted his sons, Hophni and Phineas, who were junior priests, to abuse the sacredness of the holy sacrificial system

They were also practicing blatant, sexual immorality with many women who served at the tabernacle

He eventually confronted them but did not follow through with holding them accountable

King David, although a man after God’s own heart, significantly failed as a father with regard to his son Absalom

His refusal to meet with Absalom and resolve the issues between them as father and son and this ended up in a great catastrophe

David was able to be a mighty warrior and a great ruler but he lacked knowledge how to properly relate to his own son

Hezekiah was one of Judah’s godliest kings

Yet, his son Manasseh who became king after him, was unquestionably the most wicked, ungodliest kings ever to reign over the southern kingdom

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Hezekiah had twelve years to shape this young boy’s life in God’s ways before Manasseh became king

There must have been a huge disconnect somewhere in this

Things didn’t go much better with King Josiah and his sons Jehoahaz and Jehoakim

So let’s summarize

What we should not be as fathers

Absent, indiscreet, presumptuous, partial, emotionally unstable, enablers, unforgiving, spiritually unintentional

Now, I want to make it clear, a son’s moral or spiritual failure cannot always be attributed entirely to his father

The prodigal son had a very good father but chose to live a life without any moral boundaries

What should we be like as a Christian father?

1 Timothy 6:6-16 gives us great guidance

Contentment is key

Going after material gain at any expense will not set a good example before your children

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It will take you to places you should not go

Vertical spiritual intentionality – righteousness, godliness, faith

Horizontal relational intentionality – love, patience, gentleness

Give evidence you truly believe eternity exists

Maintain a blameless testimony before others

Recognize God’s sovereignty and live with humility

It’s God’s eternal plan which matters more than anything else

Let’s make a fresh commitment to being men and fathers who leave a godly legacy now and in future generations