

A Godly Man – Ephesians 6:11

Introduction: Corporate America is big on slogans. All you have to do is watch TV and they are on your mind, In the insurance world, who puts you in good hands? (Allstate) In the Fast Food Industry, who wants you to have it your way? (Burger King). In the Building Supply industry, who tells you that you can do it and they can help? (Home Depot). What wireless phone service wants to know if you can hear me now? (Verizon).

In 1883, the US Marine Corps adopted the Latin phrase, *Semper fidelis* as their motto (later shortened to *Semper fi*). Since that time, this simple motto has been ingrained into the mind of every U.S. marine. It means "*always faithful.*"

That motto is not only appropriate for marines, but also for all godly men. God, our wives, our kids, and our friends all expect and need us to be always faithful. We must be faithful regardless of circumstances, convenience or personal happiness. It's not easy to be a good marine. It's far less easy to be a godly man.

Why is being a godly man so difficult? It's because we have an adversary, a powerful enemy who is out to keep us from being faithful. He wants to destroy our families and us. **Ephesians 6:11 (NIV)** says that we must, "*Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.*" That word "*schemes*" comes from the Greek term *methodeia*, which means "*strategies of deceit.*" It is a word picture of a bandit who lies in wait to attack passing travelers. Let me share with you some strategies of deceit Satan has set up against you and your family.

He wants to divide your family Spiritually. He wants to distract you from praying and worshipping with your family. He wants to take away your God-given influence as the spiritual leader of your home.

He wants to divide your family Emotionally. He wants you to come home, turn on the TV, or go out and spend time with your hobby. He wants you to ignore your family.

He wants to divide your family Physically. Satan has won his greatest victory when he's destroyed a family.

The tragedy is, most people don't even recognize these strategies of the enemy. Faithful men understand them and develop counter-strategies to defeat him.

Remember, Satan is a defeated enemy! Jesus ultimately defeated him on the cross. 1 Jn.4:4 says, "*He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*"

Even though Satan is ultimately defeated, he is still a powerful enemy and not to be taken lightly. 1 Pet.5:8 says, "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*"

Make no mistake, he will "*devour*" and divide your family unless you develop a battle plan, and some tactical strategies to defeat him.

Men, I want you picture in your mind a family picture album. As you open the book, you see pictures of you and your wife before she was your wife. You were so young and she was so beautiful in your eyes. As you

turn the pages, you see your wedding pictures... you were so nervous and excited at the same time. Adjusting your bifocals, you see a picture of that first little house. Turn the page again and you see your firstborn. You'll never forget that first time you held your child in your arms. That 1st birthday, 1st steps, 1st grade... There you all are at Christmas, man those were fun times. Then you turn the page and there's your kids graduating from school, and you're so proud.

Then there are the vacation pictures, the family reunion pictures, the church pictures, the special event pictures. Turn the page and there's your grandchildren's pictures. Then you close the album praising God that somehow by His grace, even though you made many mistakes, in the end you didn't fail your family.

Men, your family is depending on you, on your faithfulness, on your standing against the schemes of the evil one. Let's learn four strategies for being godly men.

1. Be Faithful with your Energy and Abilities.

Most men give themselves totally to their work. When men meet each other, the first question that is asked is, *"What is your name?"* The second question is, *"What do you do?"* As men, we identify ourselves not by who we are but by what we do. When someone asks me question 2, I say, *"I'm pastor of Sonoraville Baptist Church."* I should say, *"I'm Elaine's husband and Eric and Philip's dad."*

Think with me guys... we spend at least 40 hours per week at work, some of us a lot more than that. When we are not at work we are often preparing for work, thinking about work or having a stress-induced nervous breakdown because of our work!

Our work should be a means to an end. It should enable us provide for our families physical needs and give us a productive outlet for our abilities.

Too often it is the other way around. Instead of work enabling us to use our energy and abilities to make a positive impact on society and provide for our families, our work comes first and our families second.

Even the most noble of professions must be secondary to our families. Looking back, I now regret those times I sat through a late-night committee meeting, only to come home and find my boys already tucked in their beds. Even as Pastor, if the church leads thousands of people to Christ and disciples them as His followers, and our kids grow up without knowing their dad, has our lives been successful? No, not at all.

The legacy of a man who gave himself totally to his work (1 Sam.1-4). Eli was a great priest of God in Israel. He offered the sacrifices for all the people and was well known by everyone. He was sort of a national pastor, the Billy Graham of his day, very successful and highly respected. Eli had two sons who followed in their daddy's footsteps. They became priests too (1:3). What could make a father more proud?

While Eli's boys were growing up, he was busy in his profession. He preached and taught the whole nation to worship and honor God, yet at the same time, he ignored his family.

2:12 says that his sons were *"corrupt."* It says, *"they did not know the Lord."* Though their father led many people to know the Lord, he ignored his own sons.

Verses 13-16 tell us that when meat was brought as a sacrifice, they took the first and best portions for themselves. They robbed God. This is equivalent to a pastor taking what he wants from the offering plate. Vs. 22 speaks of how they "*lay with the women*" who came to the temple.

In vs. 22-23, Eli speaks to his sons about their sin, but does not stop them. A prophet came to Eli from the Lord and pronounced judgment upon him and his household (vs. 27-36). And in **1 Samuel 2:34-35 (NIV)**, God says, "*And what happens to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will be a sign to you--they will both die on the same day. I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his house, and he will minister before my anointed one always.*"

God said in **1 Samuel 3:12-13 (NIV)** "*At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family--from beginning to end. For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons made themselves contemptible, and he failed to restrain them.*"

God brought judgment not only on the sons, but also on the father because he put his work before his family.

The outcome of men giving themselves totally to their work. Men, when you are 85-years-old, you will not wish you had spent more time at work, you will wish you had spent more time with your family. When you reach the end of your life, the important issues will not be how much money you made or what you owned, it will be knowing God and knowing your family. We need to live right now with an eye to eternity.

2. Be Faithful with your Minds and Bodies.

We must be faithful with our minds. Wives, I want you to know that every man, including your man is tempted. Stop looking at him that way! **James 1:14 (NIV)** says, "*...each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.*" So any kind of temptation begins in the mind.

Someone said it this way, "*Sow a thought, reap an act; sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.*"

We can overcome most temptation in our minds. Let's look to 2 Cor.10:3-5. We must learn to "*bring every thought in captivity to the obedience of Christ.*"

Guys, we have to be aggressive in battling mental temptation. When Evander Holyfield beat Mike Tyson, he didn't beat him by dancing around in the ring. He took the fight to Tyson. Guys we have to take this mental fight to the enemy.

When any kind of lusty temptation comes our way, it's time to do battle. **James 4:7 (NIV)** says, "*Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*"

Here's the best counsel I've ever heard for combating temptation: The next time you look lustfully upon a lady, stop and pray for her.

We need to be faithful with our eyes, our lips, our hands, and our feet. We have to become like Joseph, and run away when that temptation becomes strong. In the words of Simon and Garfunkel, we have to "*Hop on the*

bus Gus, make a new plan Stan, drop of the key Lee and get yourself free."

The greatest gift a wife can give her husband is to be able to say, *"I've learned that you are not going to be unfaithful to me. I don't worry about that at all."*

3. Be Faithful with your Time and Opportunities.

Most men like to work hard at their work and work hard at their play. We have this urge to fill that limited time that we have away from work with some sense of accomplishment.

Now, don't get me wrong, a diversion from time to time can be healthy. But if we become obsessed with all these other things we like to do, and we let these activities take away our time and opportunities with our families, then it's not healthy.

Time is ever fleeting away. Your kids will never be this age again. Right now, they light up whenever you walk into the room. They love to sit in your lap, read stories and play games. Chances are, you'll have the rest of your life to pursue those other things, but you'll never have little kids again.

Someone told me of overhearing two 4-year-old boys talking. One asked, *"Do you have a daddy."* The other boy nodded his head yes. *"Does he live here? I don't ever see him."* The other boy responded, *"No, he doesn't live here, he just sleeps here."*

On an average, how much time to spend with your kids in a day? Now how much time do you spend on other interests?

One study suggests that fathers only spend about 37 seconds of personal interaction with their middle-school kids every day. Another study reported that preschoolers watch between 30 and 50 hours of TV per week. Who is raising our children?

Ephesians 5:16 (NIV) says we are to be *"making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil."* That is especially true with our families.

4. Be Faithful with your Soul and Spirit.

Godly dads usually expect to raise godly kids. **Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)** says, *"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it."*

People often quote that verse to mean that if you are Christian parents, then your kids will turn out all right. That's a misinterpretation. One of the greatest delusions is to suppose that our children will become followers of Christ just because they have Christian parents who took them to church

I've talked with many heart-broken parents because their kids have gone astray. They always say, *"We took them to church..."*

Dad, as the head of your home, as the spiritual leader of your family, you must realize that the church is not responsible for bringing your child to the faith, you are! The church is here to assist. Your kids are your responsibility!

A father's greatest responsibility is to pass on his faith to his children. That's where Eli failed. Dads should

be praying and longing and teaching their kids in God's ways, so that one day, they will come to them and say, Dad, tell me how I can accept Jesus in my heart. And after then, the parents should then take personal responsibility to disciple them, and spiritually lead them to grow in the faith. It's called passing the faith along.

Have you ever watched a relay race? The sprinters run part-way around the track and then pass a baton to the next runner. Dads, in the same way we are to pass on our faith. A grandfather passes it to a father, who passes it to his children who passes the baton on, generation after generation. In a relay race, the most difficult part is the passing of the baton. That's where it gets dropped. How are you doing at passing the baton?

Conclusion: How can we be faithful spiritually? Well, remember that what you do is far more important than what you say. You can become spiritually faithful by modeling a Christ-like life; by taking spiritual leadership in your home and making worship a priority. Most of us will not let our kids miss school unless they are deathly ill, yet many of us can find any number of reasons for missing church.

Semper Fidelis, always faithful... how are you doing, Dad? If the photo album of your life with your family were to close today, would you be pleased with the job you've done?