We began by honoring the graduates today, but now it’s time to honor the dads. Dad’s, I am impressed that you are here today. When God in heaven decided on a representative role for himself on earth, he chose the role, Father.

When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he said “Pray like this; Our Father who is in heaven....”

Fatherhood is the best illustration of the role of God in our lives; a hollowed place; a holy place. It is a sacred responsibility to be a father; to carry that name. I want to pray for all our fathers present right now.

PRAYER - God, you taught us when we pray to call you Father. I think you wanted us to know that you treat those who are part of your family with tenderness and compassion. We are your children because we have placed our faith in Jesus.

This morning I want to pray for all the dads that are here today. I want each of them to know how much you love them and that you stand ready to help them be the kind of fathers you want them to be. I know that all of us fall short; we all have failed. We’ve not been the role models that we should have; we’ve disciplined improperly and we haven’t been there many times when we should have.

But today, I’m asking for your forgiveness and I’m asking that you teach us today how to be better fathers, husbands and men. We will listen for your voice this morning; speak to us, I pray in Jesus name, Amen.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!!
I titled my talk today, Discipling Dads. Because we are in a very important series on discipleship, it seemed appropriate to take a close look at the role of a father in discipling his family.

Maybe you didn’t know but the word “disciple” comes from the same root as “discipline”. And the word “discipline” basically means “to train.” In the context of the church; in the context of Christianity, that is to train to be godly or Christ-like.

This morning I want to give all the Dads four principles that will help us be better disciplers, trainer for our families.

We're going to look at Philippians 2:19-30 and focus on models of manhood that the Bible spotlights for us.

In his book Missing From Action: Vanishing Manhood In America, Weldon Hardenbrook offers several models of manhood that most Americans are familiar with.

These models are projected on theater screens and on television in America by our media industry. And, not a few psychologists are suggesting that this is contributing to a great male identity crisis in America.

Hardenbrook suggests 4 false models of manhood:

(1) **THE MACHO MANIAC** - Dirty Harry, Rambo, John McClane from *Die Hard*, 007, Vin Diesel

They deny feelings, ignore the law, never worry, never complain, never apologize

- they just sweat!!
They accomplish the **impossible** every 8 minutes, and take whatever they want and they **bully** people.

(2) **THE GREAT PRETENDER** - Now this **pathetic character** who **pretends** to be macho; he **builds** himself up by **belittling** others, putting others down, even his **wife** and **family**.

He **imagines** that he **rules** his family, and that he **knows more** than he actually does about almost **everything**. In **reality** people **don't respect** him, don't **value** him.

(3) **THE WORLD-CLASS WIMP** - The **George McFly** and Homer **Simpsons**.

They are men who **continually exhibit** their **ineptitude** being constantly **outwitted** by their **children**, their **wives** and even their **dogs**. You **rarely** take them **serious** because they are always **bumbling** and **blundering**.

(4) **THE GENDER BLENDERS** - They **don't** even pretend to be **masculine**. They are **caught** in the tension of **role reversal** and identity **confusion**.

Let's **begin** our study this morning by reading from **Paul’s letter** to the church at Philippi.

Philippians 2:19-30 “**If the Lord Jesus is willing, I hope to send Timothy to you soon for a visit. Then he can cheer me up by telling me how you are getting along.** 20 **I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare.**

21 **All the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ.** 22 **But you know how Timothy has proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has served with me in preaching the Good News.**

23 **I hope to send him to you just as soon as I find out what is going to happen to me here.** 24 **And I have confidence from the Lord that I myself will come to see you soon.**
25 Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need. 26 I am sending him because he has been longing to see you, and he was very distressed that you heard he was ill. 27 And he certainly was ill; in fact, he almost died. But God had mercy on him—and also on me, so that I would not have one sorrow after another.

28 So I am all the more anxious to send him back to you, for I know you will be glad to see him, and then I will not be so worried about you. 29 Welcome him with Christian love and with great joy, and give him the honor that people like him deserve. 30 For he risked his life for the work of Christ, and he was at the point of death while doing for me what you couldn’t do from far away.”

There are three Godly models of manhood provided for us here, which can help every man better understand his role in society, in his family and in God’s church. These models will make us better husbands, better fathers and better men.

I believe God desires to train us as men, if we’ll let him; to fashion each of us into compassionate fathers, loving husbands and committed servants of Jesus Christ.

Our willingness to allow him to do his work in us is determinative in the success we experience in these areas.

"Being male is a matter of birth. Being a man is a matter of training."

As we examine our passage this morning let's look for some characteristics of true manhood from these Biblical models.

"A man's greatness is not determined by the value of his wealth, but by the wealth of his values."
Here are **4 VALUES OF TRUE MANHOOD**

1<sup>st</sup> **COMPASSION** – People before Profit

Men who put people before profits.

In the first part of this letter Paul's you can see a deep compassion and love Paul has for the people in Philippi. Listen to these statements Paul makes about the believers in that city.

1:3-4 “Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy…”

v.7-8 “So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart… God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus.”

Now listen to what Paul says of Timothy in 2:20 "I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare."

Where did Timothy’s interest in the people of Philippi come from? Where did Timothy develop his compassion for people? Paul is Timothy’s discipler. The young man, Timothy evidently learned it from Paul.

Now the great mistake of the men in our generation is that many instead of loving people and using things - they love things and use people.

God wants men who put people before profits. Loving relationships in the long run will prove to be one of your most valuable assets.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13, "If I don’t have love, I am nothing."
Do you know what a **nothing** is? It's a big **zero** with the **edges** erased.

One of the **saddest** examples of **manhood** ever witnessed in the **last** generation was **Howard Hughes**; a man who truly **used people** and **loved things** most his life. When he died his estate was worth somewhere between $7 and $8 billion.

And at the **end** he was all **alone**; **utterly and completely alone**.

When **everything** else is **gone**, the apostle Paul said, three things will **remain** - Faith, hope and **love**. And Paul says "the **greatest** of these is **love**."

"**Love never fails.**" 1 Corinthians 13:8. If you've **got nothing** else in your life but **love**, you've got the **most valuable** thing.

1 John 4:7-8 "**Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.**"

**Though** Timothy had probably **learned** from Paul the **priority** of loving people, **Paul** himself had been just the **opposite** before he **met Christ**. He was a man of **great learning** and **achievement** but there is **no evidence** that he had any **compassion** at all.

He was actually **on his way** to **slaughter** Christ followers in **Damascus** when Jesus Christ got a hold of him. The **change** in his life was one of the **most dramatic** in Christian history.

**From that point** on people became his **priority**. Though he was **never married** he had **more** to say about loving **marriage relationships** than any **other N.T. writer**. Paul **understood**
compassion and love, and he passed it on to his young disciple, Timothy.

There was "no one like him"; he took such a genuine interest in others; a priceless characteristic of a true man.

What about it Dad's? Husbands?

The Phillip's translation says of those Paul compared Timothy to: "...they are all wrapped up in their own affairs." (verse 21)

How wrapped up are you in your own affairs? One observer humorously noted, a daddy who's all wrapped up in his own affairs isn't a daddy at all - he's a mummy!!

Where does a child learn love and compassion?

VIDEO StreamAsset.asf

An inmate at the Ventura County Jail (John Peters), shared with me the pain of his childhood, much of it caused by a Dad who wasn't there for him. I don't believe most DADS intend to cause that kind of pain. They are just so busy doing their own thing, there's no time for compassionate interest in their children.

Compassion: a true value of manhood.

2nd CONSISTENCY - character before convenience

Paul says of Timothy, "no one else is like him," everyone else is looking out for their own interests.

Verse 22 "But you know how Timothy has proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has served with me in preaching the Good News."
How many times are we tempted to compromise our standards or our integrity or our commitments because they are inconvenient? Children never forget a promise, do they?

Things were getting tough where Paul was. There was a lot of opposition, both outside the church and inside the church. There were other church leaders who disagreed with Paul and were criticizing him. No wonder Paul valued Timothy's loyalty and consistency.

I'll bet you've known people who've said one thing and done another; bosses or employers who've promised things but haven't come through with them. Spouses who vowed "until death do us part" but have deserted their families.

In verse 22 it says "Timothy has proved himself." That word refers to tested character. That honors God! When your word is your bond.

Jackie and I were talking about a man in our church who, when he says he'll do something, you don't have to ask him a 2nd time. You don't have to remind him. If he said it - it's as good as done.

What a rare quality! I’m sure God expects us to be men who are committed to their values; men who will take a stand for what is right and follow through on our promises.

Maybe you've heard it said, "If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything."

Men are falling all over the place because they've failed to take a stand. We have to know God's word; know what's right and take a stand.

A value of true manhood: CONSISTENCY: Men who will put character before convenience.
Now speaking of another model of manhood Paul says in verse 25: "I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need."

Now Epaphroditus was not from Rome where Paul is in prison, nor was he one of Paul's regular traveling companions. Epaphroditus was from the church in Philippi.

I think that Epaphroditus was a leader in the church at Philippi - maybe even one of its pastors; well respected, highly thought of.

They had trusted him with the financial gift they were sending to Paul. He had delivered it faithfully, and then stayed on a while to serve Paul. Paul addresses him as his "true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier."

There is no hint of competition from either of them. Remember, Paul started that church and obviously loved the people dearly. He could have been possessive and resented other leadership.

When other leaders are criticizing Paul, evidently envious of his success, Epaphroditus doesn't join them. He doesn't seem to resent at all the love and support his own church offered to Paul. NO COMPETITION!

Years ago I was on the staff of Campus Crusade Christ. I was on High School ministry staff in Atlanta, Ga. But, there were other youth ministries in town; Youth for Christ, Young Life, Fellowship of Christian Athletes. They all worked with students.

But we were taught that we were not to compete but to cooperate with other Christian ministries. The same is true here in this city with the Camarillo Ministerial Association. We don’t
compete with the other churches in town; we cooperate whenever possible.

Yesterday there was a city-wide effort to honor fathers with a free car wash, donuts and coffee. A number of churches in town joined the effort to serve Dads in the name of Christ.

There is a triple basis for our cooperation that Paul notes in this verse.

(1) "true brother" – we’re a family. - I have a large wall plaque that I inherited when my parents died. The plaque was given to my father at his retirement. It reads:

Brother Ralph
Olympia Baptist Church
January 1, 1956
March 18, 1973
"Well Done, Thou Good and Faithful Servant."

My Dad served that church over 17 years and was known as, Brother Ralph (yep, I’m a junior) - 133 times in the N.T. the term brother was used to indicate a spiritual relationship. They recognized they were a family.

(2) "co-worker" – This scripture is clear; we don’t work for our salvation. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done. Rather, it is a free gift. But, there is work to be done.

We don’t work our way to salvation. We work our way from salvation. Once we’re saved we work in the family business.

We work together - You row on your side of the boat and I'll row on mine. If only one of us rows, we'll only go in circles.

(3) "fellow soldier" – Paul knew it was a battle.
There's a war going on for our children and we're in this battle together. I’m so grateful for the moms and dads who are going up to Fryathon. Many of them have taken off work to go and they are going up to serve the kids of parents who can’t go.

We have a common enemy, and one of the reasons the church hasn't been more effective over the past 2,000 years is because we don't know how to work together. We too often compete and too seldom cooperate.

Iron 27 is a new ministry here at our church, for men and boys. The intention is to help us dads do a better job raising Christian young men. We know it’s not easy. We need to help each other.

We need to act like true brothers, co-workers, and fellow soldiers. We need to take up for each other, watch each other's backs, take a hit for each other, support and encourage each other.

One study concluded that only 1 man in 10 has a real friend. 1 in 10! We've got to do better than that if we're going to survive; if our marriages are going to make it; if we're going to become the kind of fathers we need to be we're going to have to help each other. We must cooperate.

4th COMMITMENT - Christ before comfort
Men who put Christ before comfort.

Paul says of Epaphroditus in verse 30, "he risked his life for the work of Christ, and he was at the point of death..."

The journey from Philippi to Rome was about 800 miles over land and sea. It took approximately 6 weeks to make. Travel then was a lot different from travel today. And, carrying a large sum of money was extremely risky. But Epaphroditus went.

He evidently got very sick and almost died. But he put the cause of Christ before personal comfort.
Some years ago, while in Hong Kong, and then India, on a ministry trip, I picked up an intestinal parasite that made me so sick I thought I was going to die. It hung on for months after I returned to the U.S.

Have you ever gotten sick away from home? When you were on a trip? It's no fun. If you have, maybe you know a little of what Epaphroditus experienced. But he put his commitment to Christ before personal comfort.

Dads, when we got married, we made a commitment to Christ; it wasn’t just to our bride. Most of us were married in a church or by a pastor. And even if you weren’t, Jesus said,

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” Matthew 19:5-6 (NIV)

We are no longer committed to this relationship because it’s comfortable, but because God has sanctified the relationship. He put his stamp on it. It’s now a sacred obligation.

There are approximately 76 million children in the U.S. ages 0-17. Of those 27 million, 36%, live apart from their biological fathers. 60% of those haven’t seen their father in the past year.

Does it make a difference? YES! Over the last three decades, the research has proven that children living without their biological fathers are 2-3x’s more likely to grow up in poverty, and to have significant educational, health, emotional and psychological problems.
And, they are much more likely to suffer child abuse, and to engage in criminal behavior, than peers living with their married, biological mother and father.

Fatherless homes produce:
- 63% of youth suicides
- 90% of all runaway children
- 85% of all children with behavioral disorders
- 85% of all youths in prison
- 75% of youth in chemical abuse centers
- 71% of high school drop outs

Is the dad important? You’d better believe he is. And of course, it’s not just the 27 million children who will go to bed this evening without their Daddy at home, it’s also the untold millions of households with a man who is physically present but emotionally and spiritually absent.

God is looking for men of commitment, who are willing to put Christ before comfort.

2 Chronicles 16:9 (NIV) "For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him."

God is looking for men whose hearts are committed to Him. You say, "I'm hesitant to make a commitment because I'm not sure I have the strength to carry it through."

Notice what he says - He's looking for heart commitment. If you'll give him the commitment of your heart, he'll strengthen you and carry it out.

Review: God is looking for men of

**COMPASSION:**
- who put people before profits.
CONSISTENCY:
who put character before convenience.

COMMUNITY:
who put cooperation before competition.

COMMITMENT:
who put Christ before comfort.

I'm going to ask the men here this morning to respond to what you've heard today. If in your heart this morning you want to be the model of manhood God wants you to be; if in your heart you truly want to be God's man.

I'm going to ask you to raise your hand in a moment as we bow in prayer. We're going to close our eyes, not because we don't think you should make this commitment public, but rather to protect the privacy of those who are not ready to make a commitment like this yet.