

WHEN A DADDY DIES

GENESIS 50:1-6

Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father.

So the physicians embalmed Israel.

Forty days were required for him, for such are the days required for those who are embalmed; and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, 'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.'" And Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear."

I love Top Ten lists, and I have one today, **“The Top Ten Statements You’ll Never Hear A Dad Say...”**

10) Well, how ‘bout that?... I’m lost! Honey, it looks like we’ll have to stop and ask for directions.

9) You know Princess, now that you’re 13, you’re ready for unchaperoned car dates. Won’t that be fun?

8) Take the remote, it’s all yours.

7) Son, here’s my credit card and the keys to my new car - you and your friends *go crazy!*

6) Son, please, forget about mowing the lawn. It's a Saturday! It's your only day to sleep in.

5) Your mother and I are going away for the weekend. You might want to consider throwing a party.

4) Well now, sweetheart, I don't know what's wrong with your car. Have your mother take a look.

3) No son of mine will live under my roof without an earring. Quit your bellyaching, and let's go to the mall.

2) Why do you want to go out and get a job? I make plenty of money for you to spend.

And the #1 statement you'll never hear a dad say, 1) **Don't ask for my opinion. I really don't have one.** That's a rarity! All fathers specialize in sharing their wisdom.

But what happens when a dad's voice goes silent? When he's no longer around to provide his counsel?

I once saw a tombstone of a man named Chas Shiplett. Under his name it read "**Father,**" then under that was the inscription, "**A voice we loved is stilled.**"

One day every father's voice will be stilled.

We'll all go the way of Joseph's dad. In Genesis 49:33 we're told Jacob - or as God called him, "*Israel*" - "**drew his feet up into the bed, and breathed his last...**"

Fathers, if life takes its common course, one day our kids will be there to see us take our final breath! Our children will make our funeral arrangements.

This is what happened to Joseph while in Egypt. In Genesis 50 Joseph has to organize his dad's funeral.

As a pastor I'm often called on to organize funerals.

A pastor marries and buries folks. Recently, I was asked, "Would you rather do a funeral or a wedding?"

The answer was easy, "A funeral." At a wedding the pastor is just a prop. People forget what he said five minutes after the wedding. But at a funeral people listen. *There's death in the room.* The stakes are high. People are facing the afterlife - either heaven or hell.

Today, I want to look at Jacob's funeral, and discuss the subject, "What happens when a daddy dies?" And as we'll discover, ***it's important that a father knows.***

First, let me state the obvious... When a dad dies it's a big deal to his family. Jacob's death was certainly a major event in the lives of his sons and daughters.

Notice, the emotional reaction of his son, Joseph.

Verse 1 tells us, "Joseph fell on his father's face and wept over him, and kissed him." Joseph's grief was demonstrative - it was intense and uninhibited.

Yet in addition to Joseph's display of deep sorrow and pain, he arranged for his dad to have a state funeral, accompanied by a police escort. An entourage of Egyptian dignitaries, and Jacob's relatives, journey northward to bury Jacob in the tomb of his ancestors.

Years later, when Joseph himself is about to die, Jacob's example is so fresh on his mind that he too, asks to be buried in the same land as his father.

It's obvious Jacob's death had an enormous impact on his son, Joseph. Which accentuates my point, when a dad dies - *that's any dad* - it's a big deal for his kids.

Whether you had *a caring dad*, or a *callous dad*, or a *caustic dad* - whether your relationship with your dad was *estranged* or *ecstatic* - when a dad dies it has a profound and far-reaching effect on his child's life.

In their down times, fathers often wonder... *If I died tomorrow would my kids even miss me?* Yea, *they'll miss the handouts - and the no-interest loans - and the free mechanic to patch up the car - and the safety-net to bail them out of jams* - but will they really miss me?

You better believe they'll miss you dad - far more than you realize! When a dad passes it's no trivial matter. It changes the lives of his children forever!

My granddad died when my dad was 38 years old. And Dad claims it was the single most formative event in his life. It was what finally forced him to grow up.

Even though he'd had his own family for a dozen years by that point, he says he never felt like he was on his own until that day. It changed him dramatically.

We don't usually think of funerals as life-changing experiences, but when it's your own father's funeral - well, that can be a whole different story.

I believe there're a few lessons we can glean from *Jacob's funeral*, and *Joseph's reaction*. Lessons that will prove helpful for every family member and parent.

Dad, don't underestimate the impact you have on your kids!... So often the value of a father's influence isn't fully appreciated until after their funeral.

A friend of mine told me what he's going to have his wife engrave on his tombstone... **"They love me now."**

I want you to notice four actions Joseph took *when his daddy died*... First, he **embalmed him**. Second, he **mourned him**. Third, he **carried him** to the land of Canaan. Fourth, he **buried him** and returned to Egypt.

And dad, when you die, your kids are going to do the same to you - *embalm you, mourn you, carry you*, and ultimately, *bury you*. And if you recognize it now it'll help you make wise decisions as you live out your life.

First, notice in verse 2 that when Jacob, or Israel, died Joseph had Egyptian physicians **embalm him**.

Several years ago the museum at Emory University purchased a collection of Egyptian mummies. It's believed that one of those mummies was a pharaoh.

And I will always imagine him looking like Yul Bryner. I believe that all pharaohs should look like Yul Bryner.

According to ancient history the Egyptians were the inventors of an embalming process known as **mummification**. We're not sure why, but Egyptian religion necessitated the preservation of the remains of the dead. *Mummification was an elaborate process...*

First, the brains were removed by a crooked wire inserted through the nose... **Second**, an incision in the flank allowed for the removal of the vital organs...

Third, the head and abdominal cavities were stuffed with myrrh, cinnamon, and other aromatic spices...

Fourth, the body was soaked for a month in a solution of saltwater... And **fifth**, strips of cloth plastered on the inside with lime were wrapped around the body, forming a hard encasement. **In ancient Egypt every daddy eventually became a mummy.****

In fact I brought with me a view mummy jokes...

What's the most important day in Egypt? *Mummy's Day...*
Why do mummies have trouble making friends? *They're too wrapped up in themselves...*
What kind of music do mummies like? *Wrap music... or Ragtime...*

What kind of briefs does a mummy wear? *Fruit of the Tomb...*
Why don't mummies take vacations? *They're afraid to relax and unwind...*
If a mummy gives you two dimes for a quarter, what happened? *He E-gypted you...*
Where do mummies swim? *The Dead Sea...*

Like the ancient Egyptians, modern Americans also believe in the preservation of the dead - *and I'm not talking about embalming...* Today, every *daddy* eventually becomes - not a *mummy* - but a *memory*.

We remember our loved ones - especially our father.

We take scores of pictures - miles of video - just to insure our memories don't escape us. Egyptians preserved their *mummies*. We preserve our *memories*!

I recall my grandma - we called her “*Ma*” - when we buried her it was a bittersweet occasion. On the one hand, we missed her. On the other hand, death took her to Jesus, and her memories were restored.

For the last three years of my grandmother’s life she suffered from Alzheimers. And I learned firsthand what a terrible disease it is. Alzheimers is so awful because it robs us of what we treasure most... *our memories*.

Our memories are the only thing we take with us through life. It’s what we end up valuing the most.

Dad, you may leave your heirs a thriving business, or a huge life insurance policy, or a portfolio of stocks and bonds - but **the most important legacy a father can pass on to his wife, and children, and loved ones are happy, and holy, and healthy memories.**

It reminds me of the dad whose family was eagerly anticipating their vacation. At the last minute an unavoidable business engagement created a conflict.

Not wanting to deprive his family of their well-deserved holiday he sent them on without him. He promised to catch up with them as soon as he could.

Dad planned every detail of the trip. He arranged where they’d stay - mapped out the highways they’d take. He knew where his family would be at all times.

But there was one detail dad planned that he kept a secret. After his family's trip had begun he took off from work and flew to the city, through which his wife and kids would be

traveling that day. He had a friend pick him up at the airport, and drop him off alongside the road. He arrived a few hours ahead of the family SUV.

Imagine the expression on the faces of his wife and kids when they looked up and saw dad on the shoulder of the road, with his thumb in the air... *hitchhiking!*

Mom was so shocked it was all she could do to keep the car from swerving off the road. Needless to say, this dad's surprise set the tone for a fun-filled vacation.

Later, a friend asked this creative dad why he'd gone to so much trouble to surprise his family. He replied, "Someday I'll be dead, and when that happens, I want my family to say, *'You know, Dad was a lot of fun.'*"

Memories! A wise dad spends much thought and effort to leave his family a bushel-full of fond memories.

The last few years they were living at home, I tried to take all four of my kids on an overseas trip.

I took my daughter to Germany, a son to London, and another son to Israel. My youngest son, I took to Fenway Park in Boston. *For him, Fenway, was just as much fun!... But we all made memories together.*

And you don't have to go overseas to make memories. You can make memories at Brusters.

Brusters is an ice cream parlor near our house.

For over twenty years I've played a game with my kids. *Guess how much money is in dad's wallet and it belongs to*

you. And for twenty years none of my four kids even got close... until one night at Brusters...

I had no idea how much was in my wallet, but when the runt of the litter, Mack, said 84 bucks I had a bad, sinking feeling in my stomach. I counted it out - 81, 82, 83, 84. It was the first time in twenty years an Adams' child had hit the jackpot. It was a historic moment.

Immediately Mack started texting everyone he knew.

It cost me far too much, but I made a memory that in Adams' family lore will never be forgotten. Even to this day, years later, it gets brought up in conversation.

There are cheaper ways for a father to make memories with his kids. *I just encourage you to find them.* Make a memory with your kid and grandkids.

When Joseph's daddy died he was embalmed with sweet spices - **and when this daddy dies, I want my kids to preserve me with sweet recollections.**

The second action Joseph took when his daddy died was to **mourn him**. As we read in verse 2 there was an initial outburst of sorrow. Joseph fell on his father's face, and covered him with tears and kisses...

Yet after this immediate outpouring of grief, the lamentation settled into a much longer - more sustained - period of mourning. It lasted seventy days.

That's ten complete weeks. Think of it, after two-and-a-half months, Joseph was still mourning his dad!

Some children mourn the loss of their father for not just days, or weeks, or months - but for many years. Some folks never really get over the loss of their dad.

A father is a guiding light - the north star on his child's horizon... If he's a shooting star, or a dying star, and he doesn't shine brightly - it's hard for a child to forgive him. Thus, when that dad dies unresolved feelings surface - regrets arise and remorse sets in.

Even if he's a good dad - if he's a bright star in his child's firmament he's still not sure conflicts won't arise.

Being a dad is a tough and risky job, and it sets fathers up for inevitable conflicts with their kids. It's my job to love my kids enough to put my foot down. At times I insist on what's *best* even when it's *not popular*.

According to 1 Samuel 3:13 we're told Eli, the priest, was judged by God because "his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them." It's a dad's job to restrain his kids when they're doing wrong.

This means if you're afraid of confrontation and conflict don't sign up to be a dad. At times the very nature of the job puts a father at odds with his children.

It reminds me of the night when my sons and I were walking across the ball field to the car. Out of the blue, my oldest son - 15 at the time and full of testosterone - says to me, "Dad, take off your glasses and wrestle. I think I can take you." "Oh, you think you can take me?"

I took off my glasses, and handed them to his two stunned brothers. *The older sibling had challenged the status quo. Life as they knew it had been threatened.*

It took 5 seconds for me to have my son in a full nelson, rubbing his face in the grass. I'd put down the challenge. Restored order! *The world was right again.*

Hey, a family is in big trouble if the patients are allowed to take over the asylum. Your kids are going to wrestle with you dad, but if I've learned anything about being a father, it's this... **a dad has to win the battles.**

Dad, your children **will forgive your mistakes, but cowardice will send them elsewhere for strength.**

It reminds me of "Cori" - an unwed mom who went home to live with her parents. She needed help raising her son, but she resented her dad's household rules.

Dad warned Cori that to live *under his roof* she would have to live *under his rules*... One night, long after her curfew, she came home to a locked house.

The doorbell rang. Out on the front porch stood Cori and her baby pounding on the door asking to come inside... *Listen to her dad tell the rest of the story...*

"I saw Michael, my grandson, bundled up in a baby carrier next to Cori. I pointed to my watch and closed the curtain. She continued to bang and ring, waking up my wife and daughter. They both pleaded, "Daddy, let her in. The baby is out there." I responded, "No, if we hold the line now, we won't have to do this again."

I wondered about the risk I was taking. I might wound my daughter permanently. My tiny grandson was out there. I might be blamed forever. For 20 minutes the girls begged me to reconsider. Finally I said, *“No, I’m going to bed, and you should too.”*

Cori eventually spent the night at a friend’s house.

But the next morning she came home and she apologized to her dad. She agreed to submit to the rules - and her father joyfully welcomed her home.

But that’s a dad’s job! He’s the guy who has to draw the line in the sand. If he loves his kids he’ll discipline them appropriately... *but he never really knows how it’s going to turn out - whether his kids will end up **receptive** or **resentful**.* Fatherhood is a risky business.

Some father-child relationships barely make it through the tumultuous teenage years - others part ways only to be reunited later - still others never rediscover common ground and make reconciliation.

Sadly, I know many an 18 year-old whose pride and independence caused them to reject their father. They said harsh words and bucked their dad every step of the way... Later, the child wanted to repair the damage done to his relationship with dad, but it was too late.

When a dad dies his kids mourn. If he was a good dad they mourn the loving relationship they’ll miss. If he was a crummy dad they’ll mourn the good he could have done, but didn’t. But regardless, **they’ll mourn.**

When I die I want my family to mourn for the right reasons...
Dad, when it comes to your family, if there's something you need to do, or time you need to spend, or something you need to say... *do it now*. And the same goes for the **wives**.
Today is the day of salvation.

Don't wait until tomorrow - tomorrow may be too late.

There's an old song by *Mike and the Mechanics* entitled, "[In the Living Years](#)." If relationships need to be repaired - regrets expressed and wrongs admitted - explanations offered - apologies made - forgiveness extended - communication revived... then seek it in **the living years**. When a daddy dies... it's too late!

The third action Joseph took when his daddy died was to **carry him**. At the end of Genesis 49, just before he dies, Jacob charges his sons to carry his body back to the land of Canaan. He wants to be buried in the cave at Machpelah - the tomb of his ancestors.

In Chapter 50 Joseph organizes an elaborate funeral procession. He follows Jacob's orders explicitly.

Joseph's insistence on carrying his father's body back to Canaan proves to me that Jacob's impact on Joseph's life lasted long after Jacob was dead.

[A father's influence long outlives him](#). It carries on for a lifetime - *often even longer!* In Chapter 49 Jacob blesses each of his twelve sons. *Read the blessings...*

He invests in each of his boys hopes, and dreams, and expectations, and warnings - and surprisingly his blessings become prophecies. A study of Chapter 49 reveals how each

of the twelve blessings he bestows turn into a thumbnail sketch of the history of each tribe.

Each of Jacob's sons either *live up* to their potential or *fall below* it, based on their father's expectations.

Dad, every time you interact with your child you help to shape his or her destiny. A father's expectations become his children's ambitions... Your off-handed comments will build up or tear down their self-worth...

The words you use... your tone of voice... how you treat people... what you value... how you respond to situations... produce patterns that your child will *follow* and *fall back* on for the rest of their life.

For years I coached Little League baseball. I'm now coaching again, my grandson, and I'm having a ball.

But I'll never forget the conversation I had with my son, Zach, about the years we spent together on the diamond - *his years playing, and my years coaching*.

When I reminded Zach of all the lessons baseball had taught him, he interrupted me - *teenagers are good at that* - he told me baseball hadn't taught him anything. He said the reason he'd learned so much on the field was the opportunity it gave him to watch me - how I handled situations and interacted with people.

I pray that what he learned was good and godly.

One of my fondest memories of **my** dad were his Sunday trips to see his invalid sister at a downtown Atlanta nursing home. Dad walked out on many a thrilling football game to

make that boring visit week after week. I've since grown to admire his compassion and faithfulness - and I want to emulate it in my life.

It's true of all father-child relationships - issues that are important to the first generation somehow get transferred to the second, and even third generations.

I know this isn't a new idea, but dad, be careful! The attitude you exhibit... your kids are prone to emulate.

Joseph carried Jacob on a stretcher from Egypt, north to the cave of Machpelah, but let's not forget a child carries his parents in his heart and mind forever.

James Ryle was a drug dealer and thief when he was arrested. At 19 years old he was sent to prison.

But in prison Ryle heard of the love of Jesus, and the price He paid on the cross for us to be forgiven. From inside a penitentiary James Ryle submitted his life to Jesus, and God gave him a brand new start.

After James was released, he looked up his father. When the conversation turned to prison life, his dad asked him, "[What prison were you in?](#)" When James Ryle answered, his father was startled.

Ryle's dad had been a welder who'd traveled cross-country building penitentiaries. In fact, the father built the very prison in which his son had been incarcerated. *James Ryle lived in a prison built by his own father!*

And this is true of a lot of people!

A father's reputation, indiscretions, abuses - can create a prison in which his child is forced to live.

His influence weighs his children down - binds them emotionally - hinders them from being all they can be.

I don't want to build a prison around my kids. I'd rather fashion a launching pad, a training ground, a caring home, a vibrant church - anything but a prison!

Finally, the fourth action Joseph took when his daddy died was to **bury him**. What a strange sight for the Canaanites to see a caravan of Egyptians traveling to an obscure cave on the outskirts of the wilderness...

At the threshing floor, they hold a funeral that lasts seven days. The mourning is so dramatic they rename the place "**Abel Mizraim**" or "*the mourning of Egypt.*"

Imagine a funeral that lasted a whole week.

And notice, this was in addition to the 70 days of mourning in Egypt. Nearly three months elapsed from the time Jacob died until his burial. Make no mistake about it, Joseph loved his dad and thoroughly mourned his loss... *but once he buried him he moved on.*

Verse 14 tells us, "**And after he buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt...**" He went back to work.

Joseph got on with his life. Yes, for the rest of their days he and his brothers *carried their father in their hearts* - but in the meantime they definitely *carried on!*

It reminds me of the Georgia Bulldogs football game.

The stadium was packed to the gills - except for one seat on the 50 yard-line. There was an elderly woman sitting next to one, lone, conspicuously empty seat.

Someone asked, "*Why the empty seat?*" She replied, "This was my husband's seat, but he died recently."

The fellow said, "*That's sad, but why didn't you get another family member to replace him?*" She replied, "No one was available. They are all at his funeral."

Granted, maybe that's burying someone and moving on a little too quickly - but when a daddy dies there comes a point when his children have to move on!

This is why it's so important - *in the living years* - for a dad to prepare a child for that critical moment. It's a dad's job to get his kids ready to go on without him.

I believe the goal of fatherhood is to work yourself out of a job... You expect your kids to need you at 7 years old - even at 17 years old - but if they're still depending on ole dad at 27... there's a huge problem.

When my fourth child, Mack, was born I had the privilege of cutting the umbilical cord. I grabbed the scissors from the doctor, and snipped the prenatal connection between my child and his mom. In a subtle, yet profound sense, suddenly my son was on his on...

But that was just the beginning. Today, he's almost thirty, and the cord is finally cut - *but it happened a little at a time*. It's been my job to wean - grow - teach him to make his own decisions - solve his own problems - develop his own skills, and thoughts, and ambitions.

Psalm 127:3-4 speaks to this task, “Children are a heritage from the LORD... Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth.”

At the time this psalm was written archery was new to the field of weaponry. Prior to its utilization soldiers fought hand to hand, face to face. But with the the bow and arrow a soldier could strike a target from a distance - without personal proximity to the enemy.

And this is a father's desire - to send his kid on ahead - to help them go where he can't travel - and to accomplish more than his hands will ever touch.

Once, I was asked, “*Don't you hope your kids turn out like you?*” I responded, “*If my kids only turn out as good as me I'll be hugely disappointed. I'm praying they turn out to be a far better person than their dad!*”

I want my kids to sail farther, straighter, faster than their dad! I'm the archer, and it's up to me to set the arrow on the proper course to strike its intended target.

One day my kids will bury me... And every day from now until then, I'm working to provide my children fond memories... and a godly example they can carry with them... I hope they'll mourn - for all the right reasons...

Yet I will have failed in my fathering, if after they've shed their tears, they lack a strength and focus to get up, and carry on with what God has called them to do.

I want them to go ahead, and be a witness for Jesus.

Well, to sum it up, when a daddy dies... his kids **embalm him, mourn him, carry him, and bury him.**

Dad, one day you're going to breathe your last, and join the folks in the cemetery, pushing up daisies.

It's not **If A Daddy Dies** - it's **When A Daddy Dies**...

That means, if you want to build a legacy your children will be happy and proud to carry... then you've got to do it now, *in the living years*. Start today!