

# On Dads

## By Arvid Carlson

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Today's text comes from the first book of the Bible Genesis chapter 7 verse 1 where the Lord said unto Noah Come thou and all thy house into the ark for thee Have I seen righteous before me in this generation. If anyone in biblical history deserves a Father's Day award it must be Noah. He lived a holy life in the midst of one of Earth's unholy hours. He built a boat long before anyone had seen a drop of rain. And more importantly he saved his entire family from destruction which ultimately came upon an unbelieving world.

It is not by accident therefore that Noah's name appears in the Westminster Hall of Fame in the 11th of Hebrews. But why is his name included. The record says he prepared an ark to the saving of his house. The greatest thing which God can say to any parent is exactly that he prepared an ark to the saving of his house. God is not interested primarily in your social standing your prestige your place in the business world. Your position in the educational world your rank in the financial world or your standing in the political world. The question God asks of you is simply this. Are the members of your household safe in the ark? Nothing else matters. When the waters of judgment begin to rise over the face of the earth and that's why God issues a special call to dads today. He very well knows that the fathers are the prime movers and molders of their children. He very well knows that fatherless children soon become problem children social and spiritual orphans in a world of disease drugs sin sex and promiscuity. Listen to that text again. Come thou and all thy house into the ark.

And mark if you will the persons involved in this simple statement thou and thy house this call did not come to a mother but to a father. God did not did not say to Noah's wife Mrs. Noah get the children ready. Your husband is a very busy man. He won't have time to do so. No no. And a thousand times no. But somehow the 20th century has reversed that order. Mothers are supposed to bring up the children. How often have we not heard the scornful criticism. Religion is for women and children. But God doesn't intend to let you dads off of the hook if this word teaches us anything it plainly says that the fathers must lead the way. It is necessary for us to be the best examples possible. We cannot expect our children to imitate our virtues when they see so many of our vices. A farmer with a five year old boy walked into a bar in Winston-Salem a few years ago and said to the bartender give me a cool glass of beer and what for the little man. Asked the bartender I'll have the same as my daddy cancel the order said the farmer and give us two glasses of water.

I say shame on the father who sets his son a bad example and then punishes him for doing the very same thing. You cannot expect your children to be Christians when you refuse to become one. You hate hypocrites and hypocrisy but so do your children especially if they see it in you. You want your children to pray. And yet you never pray. How come the story is told of a dying youth who said to his dad Dad when I'm dead bury me by the old horse path. And when you pass the place on the way to the pasture be sure to say there lies the body of a boy who never heard his father pray. Dads they have a right to ask you to lead the way and if you don't who will. Not only should we be examples to our children but we should be their counsellors and their best friends. One of the easiest ways to lose them is simply to become too involved. It is oftentimes more true in church work than anywhere else. Other vineyards have I kept my own have I not

kept said the wise man. We become burdened about everyone's children but our own. May I remind you today that there is no substitute for companionship?

You can give your children a good home a splendid education a large inheritance beautiful clothes and even a place in society. But what that boy or girl really longs for. Who is your daughter or your son is simply for our father's friendship. I once heard Dr John Church a Methodist evangelist tell the story of a pastor whom he visited in a southern community as they drove out of town into the country. The pastor pointed to a beautiful mansion along the side of the road. He said there lives the richest man in these parts. He is worth about three million dollars. Many people around here think he's the greatest but not his family. They know that he is the most miserable failure in this county. He brought six children into the world one of whom became a harlot one was institutionalized because of sin. One is divorced and living with a man not yet hers. All three of his sons are drunkards and two of them were on drugs. Three million dollars said the pastor didn't save a single life. No. And it will not save the lives of our children either.

I have a habit of picking up little clippings here and there and this one came to my attention a few years ago and I'd like to share it with you it is entitled What to give a small boy. The editor of the newspaper in which this clipping was found wrote as follows the other day my neighbor called me aside and said he had spent all of two weeks trying to decide what to give his eight year old boy for his birthday. At the time I couldn't offer any suggestions because the boy apparently had everything. A short while later I found the answer so ably expressed in this poem by an unknown but understanding writer and it was about a boy what shall you give to one small

boy a glamorous game a tinsel toy a Bi-Lo knife a puzzle pack a train that runs on a curving track a picture book a real live pet. No there's plenty of time for such things yet give him a day for his very own. Just one small boy and his dad alone a walk in the woods a romp in the park a fishing trip from dawn to dark. Give the gift that only you can the companionship of his old man. Games are outgrown and toys decay but he'll never forget. If you give him a day and the editor added remember this dad the next time you wonder what you can do for your boy. The text not only points out the persons involved here but it prescribes the place to which they were invited come thou and thy house into the ark. How simple how unadorned but how easily missed. Everyone ought to know that the Ark is a type of our salvation.

It was the only place of refuge in that dark antediluvian hour no man could climb a hill high enough to escape the swirling waters of the wrath of God. Once the door was shut there was no place to hide. My dear friend we're talking about something far more important than the ark we're talking about our eternal salvation. Do I need to say it again and again? There is none other name under heaven whereby we must be saved. There is one God and one mediator between God and man the man Christ Jesus who himself said I am the way the truth and the life no man cometh unto the Father but by me no matter what you tell yourself about the goodness of God and your chances of getting by. You very well know that you are whistling in the dark and that you are only kidding yourself. You must recognize this Jesus Christ as your savior or you will never enter the ark. You must come in by the door and he said I am the door and he that climbeth up some other way is a thief and a robber.

Besides being the only place it is the only adequate place about which we are speaking the ark was built according to Divine specifications. Salvation in Christ meets every requirement in both God and man. God was satisfied with it. Christ was satisfied with it. The apostles were satisfied with it. Why not you. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him. The Ark is big enough for all to come who want to come.

It is amply stocked with sufficient supplies to take us through from Earth to glory. But you must come. No message to fathers and mothers is needed more than this one. Salvation has always been needed as far as our homes go but never has there been a greater need for the message than in this terrible hour. This is a day of unbridled wickedness in the world. This is a day of indescribable lawlessness and sensuality in the world. This is a day when both educators and legislators are throwing up their hands in despair trying to cope with the problems which confront us.

Society appears to have slipped beyond the point of no return and our only hope is to rebuild the ark and to enter that refuge of salvation. There is no solution outside of the Ark a flood will come. It says and take them all away. And so said the scriptures in that day and so will it be again. History is destiny as judgment but history's hope is the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and in his soon and certain return. You and your children fathers as well as mothers cannot survive outside of the Ark.

Therefore Come thou and thy children into the ark. I hasten to point out in closing the promptness of Noah's response in Genesis 7:7 it says and Noah went in and his sons and his wife and his sons wives with him into the ark. There was a necessary urgency in that invitation come. It wasn't the come of a nagging or unprincipled parent but the command of flight from a burning building. It was not a matter of alternative but a matter of imperative. Let me urge you dads and mothers today regarding the drastic necessity of action in this respect.

God never dilly dally around with this matter of salvation. It is based not on tomorrow but upon the word today. Today if you will hear his voice harden not your heart. Now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation. There were many in Noah's day who did not respond to the invitation. Some were procrastinators. They said someday but not now. Why the big hurry. We've heard the same old stuff for one hundred and twenty years. There's time to burn. Indeed there was time to drown and time to die but no time to burn procrastination is a thief of time.

Year after year it steals till all are fled and to the mercies of a moment leaves the vast concerns of an eternal scene. Some were plainly skeptical. They considered Noah one of these hair 'em scare 'em evangelists who had in his senility lost his marbles. They said one to another no one is going to scare me into believing. May I remind you that all warnings are not scares? However God does not hollow wolf wolf or play games with us. He says what he means and he means what he says and when he says come into the ark and come in now he doesn't mean tomorrow for there are no tomorrows with God.

And then finally there were some who were just indifferent. They would have said you can believe what you want to. Everyone is entitled to his own opinions. They were the secularists of our day. The existentialists of our time. They lived for the day thinking another would be along soon but another never came. I want to conclude this message today by inviting especially you fathers to come into the ark and bring the children with you. Bring your wife with you. Come thou and thy house into the ark. What will your answer be to this invitation? How will you respond? What will your children say if you fail to lead the way? May I ask you to seriously consider these questions today and to come thou and thy children into the ark? Let us pray together.

Gracious Lord Remember now all of those who are on the brink of a decision and may they quickly respond to the gentle invitations of the Holy Spirit when he invites them to come into the ark of refuge and into the ark of salvation which is Jesus Christ our Lord hear us for we pray in his name. Amen.