

# Characteristics of an Upright Man

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[ 0 : 00 ] I'm in today's Father's Day.

And I have some important things to say to each of you.! And ladies, this is for you as well.! Last night in America, 26 million children went to bed without a father in the home.

Many of them have never seen and will never see the man that fathered them.

63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes. 90% of homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes.

85% of all children who display behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes.

[ 1 : 18 ] 80% of males committing assaults on females come from fatherless homes. 71% of high school dropouts come from fatherless homes.

70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from fatherless homes. And 75% of adolescent patients in substance abuse centers come from fatherless homes.

71% of children come from fatherless homes. 71% of children went to bed with a father in the home, but he might as well have been absent.

71% of children have little or no interaction with their kids. 71% of children have little kids and when they do, it is almost always negative.

Over the next 20 years, law enforcement will be dealing with many and probably the majority of those 26 million kids. or read about this every day as your police chief. Many will grow up to become the thieves and the robbers and the rapists and the murderers of our society. Why is this? They had no one to guide them through the minefields of life. He simply was not there.

[ 2 : 59 ] So I want to talk to you this morning on this Father's Day about three interrelated items. I want to talk to you about an anchor and a chain and the links that make up a chain.

Now note at the outset that all three must work together for them to function properly. If you don't have a chain connected to the anchor then it is just a mass of metal resting on the seabed.

If you don't have an anchor the chain is just something dangling in the water. And if you don't have individual links then you can't have a chain at all. So all three must work together or they don't work at all. And in fact when I mention one I'm really talking about all three.

The purpose of an anchor is to keep a ship from drifting. The purpose of a spiritual anchor is to keep a person from drifting. And when that person is a Christian husband and father the spiritual purpose is to keep the entire family from drifting. Every one of us in this room is a link in a family chain. And in truth there are multiple thousands of links in my family. All those who came before me including father, the grandfathers, and so on are gone. They have passed from the scene and some are in heaven with the Lord and sadly some are not. But each one of us has a family chain made up of individual links that stretches all the way back to Noah beyond him to Adam and Eve. That's our chain.

Now God is very familiar with family change. He's very familiar with individual links that make up the chain because he created them. Allow me at this juncture to make a very important observation.

God places the responsibility of building and nurturing the links in the family chain on the father.

Fellas, that's your responsibility. Fathers are responsible for the links in the family chain. This is a high calling that God has placed upon us. I'm responsible to take care of my links and each of you

is responsible to take care of your links. Now let me add something really quickly. Some of you in here, some of you men are single. Never been married, never going to be married. You've made that clear and you don't have children. You're not going to have children. Let me tell you something.

[ 6 : 13 ] Every child in this church is your spiritual child. And you have the same responsibilities.

And when the father is absent or derelict, spiritual nourishing falls on the mother.

Ladies, that's why I said you're part of this too. She becomes the principal spiritual guide in the home because the father has shirked his responsibilities.

I've seen homes where both parents have shirked that responsibility and a little 11, 12 year old girl is the spiritual guide of the family. And that's not the way it's designed to be.

I want to read you a passage out of the Old Testament and we're going to be all over the place in the Bible. This is very instructive for a purpose taken from Deuteronomy chapter 6.

It is here God lays a tremendous responsibility, not just upon the shoulders of men, but specifically on the shoulders of fathers.

[ 7 : 23 ] In chapter 6 verse 1, he says this, Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments, which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you that you might do them in the land where you are going to possess it, so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord, the Lord your God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.

And I hope you all heard the greatness of that passage. God speaks there of fathers, sons, and grandsons.

And I will include in there the word granddaughters. In that passage, God gives to us the command, the opportunity, and the privilege to be part of something great.

And if we are wives, we will heed the instructions of the Lord found in this passage. So what is this great thing that God intends for us to accomplish?

I'm glad you asked that, because that's why I'm here today. God expects, and it's another major point, God expects every Christian father to anchor his family for a minimum of 100 years.

[ 9 : 02 ] 100 years. Fathering is so important and so serious that God expects that each man in this room will anchor his family for at least 100 years.

Now the question arises, where in the world did I come up with that number? Is 100 years as a family acre even possible? Well, God thinks so. Listen again to what he says.

So that you and your son and your grandson, talks three generations right there, doesn't he? Three generations are right there.

The only hope we have in being the anchor God wants us to be for our families over the next 100 years is to live the Christian life.

And that means we must not only put on display, but live out the proper character of a Christian. We are to put on display that proper character when we are with our wives, when we are with our parents, our children, our grandchildren, our church members, our pastor, fellow employees, our bosses, our friends, our enemies, our families, and especially when we are alone.

[ 10 : 26 ] Especially when we are alone. I once saw a church marquee that said this, your character is what you do when you're all alone.

That's what your true character is. And we all realize something, don't we? Christians are never really alone. God is with us all the time and a witness to what we do and think and even down to our subconscious.

I came across a question when I was preparing this lesson. Gave me pause. I'm still reflecting on it. Another major point, by the way. I'm going to ask you this question so that you can reflect upon it the rest of today, perhaps the rest of your life.

If everybody in this church had your character, what kind of church would it be? Just think about that.

If this church adopted your individual character, what kind of church would it be? That question can be troubling, but it's certainly one to reflect upon.

[ 11 : 46 ] So I want to talk this morning about Christian character. There is a word widely used in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. It was well known by the Puritans and the Reformers.

It was brought to the shores of America by the pilgrims. It was understood by Calvinistic Baptists and Calvinistic Presbyterians as they played out their vital role in the founding of our nation and the writing of our important documents.

The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. It is the word upright. Upright.

Upright in character. Upright. Upright. The word upright and the companion words, uprightly and uprightness, are used some 97 times in the King James Version of the Bible.

Upright. And it is a word that has largely disappeared from Christian language. When's the last time you heard someone say, he displays an upright life or he lives uprightly or he is an upright man. [12:58] Yet uprightness is essential to Christian character and to Christian living and to the sanctification process.

And if by chance there's someone here unfamiliar with that term, sanctification, it is the lifelong process God uses to recreate us in the image of Christ. And it is vitally important, in fact, it is essential to becoming the anchor for your family for at least 100 years. You can't even begin to be that godly anchor God desires you to be unless you put on the character and the qualities of the upright man.

And dare I say, the upright woman. Because ladies, you're part of this. Someone has said that if you want to be wise, read the Proverbs.

If you want to be holy, read the Psalms. Here is but a sampling of what we find in both books concerning the upright man.

[14:07] My defense is of God which saveth the upright in heart. Psalm 710. For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright.

Psalm 711. Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness and speaks the truth in his heart.

Psalm 15, 1-2. I was also upright before him and kept myself from mine iniquity. Psalm 18, 23. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me for I wait on thee.

Psalm 21, 15. Now let's switch to the Proverbs. Proverbs 2, 7. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous. He is a buckler to them who walk uprightly.

Proverbs 10, 29. The way of the Lord is strength to the upright. Proverbs 11, 3. The integrity of the upright shall guide them.

[15:12] 11, 6. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them. 11, 11. By the blessing of the upright, the city is exalted.

Even the city can be exalted by the upright. And I can assure you that those are but a sampling of the word upright used in the Holy Scriptures.

As I was preparing this study, I came across a Puritan writing which spoke of the character of the upright man. In that book was what the author called the six marks of the upright man.

That sounded good to me. And then I came across a work detailing the 11 marks of the upright man. So I got a little intrigued. Then I found 15 and 29 and talking about the upright man.

And then the all-time record that I found was 62 marks of the upright man. And at this point I was being overwhelmed. I knew I wasn't about to do that in 45 minutes or even in one day.

[16:21] So I made a selection. I chose certain marks that I felt would lend themselves to accomplishing the task of being the anchor for your family for at least three generations.

And this is not an exhaustive study. More diligence would yield more marks. They are everywhere in God's word. Now some of you are going to be writing furiously.

Let me tell you. Out in the foyer. And John and I hope Jerry. I didn't get to ask him. But I think John did. They're going to hand these out to you. There's a list here of the characteristics of the upright man.

And they'll be available to you. If we run out, I'll make more. The marks or the characteristics that I chose are in no particular order of importance.

They're all important. And I'm going to use man primarily as the male. But ladies, you've already heard my explanation for that. The upright man studies to obtain the approval of God.

[17:36] Study to show thyself approved unto God. But seeking the approval of God is the business of the upright man.

God is a person. And like any person, the more time we spend with him, the better we will get to know him. And he can be known. He wants to be known in intimate detail.

And we get to know God better. And better we are able then to better teach that to our children and to our grandchildren. The upright man loves God without reservation.

The infallible characteristic of the upright man is contained in the greatest commandment God ever gave. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

Love and worship are related. We can do neither if one is absent. We cannot be in communion with God until we give him the priority that he deserves from each one of us.

[ 18 : 53 ] But that begs another question. How can we know for certain that we love him at the level he demands? And John provides the answer.

1 John chapter 2 verses 3 to 6. By this, we know that we have come to know him if we keep his commandments.

The one who says, I've come to know him, but does not keep his commandments, is a liar. And the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word in him, the love of God has truly been perfected. By this, we know that we're in him. The one who says he abides in him ought also to walk in the same manner as he walked. Then 1 John 4 verse 20.

If someone says, I love God and hates his brother, he is a liar. For the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

[ 20 : 02 ] Now note that one of these is vertical and one is horizontal. Love God, love your fellow man. Jesus went further and said, love your enemies.

Come on, Lord, you're meddling now. He says, love your enemies. The very mark of the Christian is that we have love one for another.

Love one for another. The Lord said by genuine love the world would know that we belong to him. And the world would rightly conclude by looking at our love for each other that Jesus came from the Father.

And is the true Messiah. And let me make one final comment about the great commandment. No one has ever attained that level of love except the Lord Jesus Christ.

None of us. None of us. You will never attain that in this lifetime if we use the word all. Total. 100%. It is not to perfection in this life.

[ 21 : 13 ] But it is definitely to be our direction in this life. And we do violate that. We fall short. It drives us to our knees thanking God for the Lord Messiah.

Who did fulfill that. Who did fulfill that. Hide us in him. Cloak us in his righteousness. The upright man loves others to include family, friends, strangers, and enemies.

That is the second greatest commandment. Love your neighbor as yourself. The upright man fears God.

Because fear is the beginning of all knowledge. Proverbs 1.7. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Now I need to put a little definition here. When we speak Christians fearing God. It is reverential awe.

[ 22 : 20 ] We are in awe. We are in awe. We are in awe. We are not hiding from God. We are not crying out as will happen in Revelation.

And asking the rocks and the mountains to fall on us and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb. That's not for us. That's the unsaved world that doesn't want to appear before Christ.

The fear spoken of here is reverential trust and awe. We are in awe of him. But we don't adopt this attitude.

Well, I'm going to talk to the buddy upstairs. He's the holy God of the universe. And we're in awe of him. It is the awe that comes from being in the presence of a vastly superior being.

The upright man is a true worshiper of God. But the hour is coming and now is here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.

[ 23 : 24 ] For the Father is seeking such people to worship him. John 4.23 Jesus told that to the woman of the well, a Samaritan woman. You know, in the last few years, some churches went through this seeker movement.

That was a big thing and kind of disappeared off the scene. But the Bible says there's only one seeker. That's the Lord. The Lord, the Father, they're seeking those who will worship him.

The upright man obeys in whatever the circumstance he finds himself in.

He's obedient. In the closing words of the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus tells us that we must build our house on the rock.

Remember that ending there? You have the house on the rock, house on the sand. And sometimes people think the Sermon on the Mount is a Beatitudes. You know, that's just part of it. It's chapter 5, 6, and 7 of Matthew.

[ 24 : 31 ] Therefore, and what's the word therefore? To describe what came before. It's therefore is therefore. Therefore, what happened, what I've already said in three chapters, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the

rock.

The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house, and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.

Now, we all understand something, don't we? Jesus is the rock of our salvation. We know that. But in context, here the Lord is speaking of our obedience to the living rock through his word.

Obedying his word. He refers to these words of mine and acts on them. When we disobey, we break fellowship with him.

A man that disobeys as a pattern of life is walking in darkness and not practicing the truth. Not practicing the truth. A lifelong pattern of disobedience is evidence of no salvation.

[ 25 : 56 ] The Bible is very clear on that. The upright man bears true fruit. And all that word, much.

Much true fruit. How do we bear fruit? We've been saved for that purpose. Read Ephesians 2, chapter 2, verse 10.

Sometime. How do we bear fruit? By striving daily. To put on display the fruit of the Spirit.

Well, where's that? Galatians 5, 23. To have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control.

And I want you to notice how those build on each other. When you have agape love, as the Lord did, sacrificial love for one another, you're joyful.

[ 26 : 58 ] That brings peace, and that gives you patience. And then you're kind, and you're good, and your faith builds, and that leads to self-control.

When you have all that, you're under control. It builds on each other, starting with love. The upright man loves his wife.

Hear that, guys? The upright man loves his wife. Husband, husbands, plural, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Men, your love for your wife is to be so intense, you will live for her, and if need be, you will die for her. You will never anchor your family if you don't love your wife at all times.

And let me say this, never let your kids or grandkids see you not loving your wife. Don't ever do that. A number of years ago, a man came to Dr. Sproul, R.C. Sproul, and he said, I'm going to divorce my wife.

[ 28 : 11 ] I don't love her. Do you have any advice for me? And Dr. Sproul said, go home and love your wife. And he said, well, you didn't hear me.

And there are some people that have trouble hearing, I feel, for people like that. My wife's already frowning at me. I love you, honey. He said, you didn't hear me, Dr. Sproul.

I don't love my wife. And Dr. Sproul said, no, you didn't hear me. Go home and love your wife. He said, I'm sorry, sir. I've already told you I don't love my wife. He said, well, the disconnect between us, he told this man, you don't understand the Greek language.

Go home and do loving things for your wife. And when you've done enough, that love will return.

And Dr. Sproul said, I don't care what it is. Go home and vacuum. Go home and load the dishwasher or unload it. I'm better at unloading than loading. I mean, I thought, you know, two cups and it was ready to go.

[ 29 : 22 ] But my wife gets a lot more in. Do loving things and love will return. And that's what Dr. Sproul said the original language is claiming.

Husbands, do loving things for your wives just as Christ did loving things for the church and gave himself up for the church.

the upright man trains his children. Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

I've seen that in action in this church. Had a brother in Christ, quite old, past now, he's in glory. He consternated over one of his rebellious children.

And I read that to him and I said, when he's old, he won't depart. And that child came back. It was after that brother departed, but that child, grown by then, returned to the faith.

[ 30 : 25 ] Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Brothers, you cannot train up a child unless you spend time with them.

You can't do it long distance. Let me tell you, young fathers or fathers-to-be, there's a day coming. There's a lot of young fathers here.

I'm looking at one there and I see some other. There's a day coming when you're going to say to your child, hey, let's go do this or that.

I have some plans for us today. Let's load up in the car and that child's going to look at you and he's going to say, dad, thank you, but I already have plans with my friends.

That day's coming at you and it's coming at you like a freight train running downhill and you can't stop it and you can't slow it down.

[ 31 : 40 ] It's coming. It came in my life twice. It's why I love grandchildren. I get do-overs. But it came in my life twice.

It's natural. It's going to happen. And men, you have 18 years to train that child to be the anchor and after that, you have to do it long distance.

Then you have to do it long distance. The upright man is sensitive to sin and deals with it daily and even hourly in this life.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1.9. Memorize that. Don't do anything spiritual before you go to 1 John 1.9. Memorize that verse. And then in 1 John 2.1, if any man sin, and I think the meaning there is win, we have an advocate with the Father.

[ 32 : 51 ] That's a defense attorney, by the way. Jesus Christ, the righteous one. Think about that. Our defense attorney is our judge. If you're going to go before a judge, pretty good system if he's also your defense attorney.

Spurgeon said that he spoke to God every 10 minutes during his waking hours. He might have gone for three hours.

He might have gone for five minutes or one minute. But he was in direct communication with the Lord in his waking hours. And when he woke up at three in the morning, he talked to the Lord.

He talked to the Lord. Be that kind of man. The upright man knows that he is not an upright man. But he presses on to be glorifying to God, honoring to God, and obedient to the Spirit.

[ 33 : 53 ] Philippians 3.13-14 says this, Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth into those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Years ago, I had a man coming, not in this church, another church, and he said, I'm really having some trouble with something happened with some individuals in our church that was directed at me. I've forgotten them. I've forgiven them, but I'm struggling with it. Do you have any advice? I said, sure, forget it. He said, well, I can't forget it. Forget it.

I can't forget it. Give it to Jesus. He'll help you forget it. He'll help you forget it. I love what John MacArthur says in one of his footnotes on this passage. He says, forget past defeats and forget past victories.

They will both debilitate you. We're not living in the past. We're pressing on, aren't we? We're pressing on toward Christ. There's so much more I wish I could say this morning.

[ 35 : 14 ] The upright man is responsible, a spiritual leader, humble, defends the word of God, is a man of prayer, is a man of repentance and confession, prefers the glory of God to the applause of men, keeps his word to God and to man, is at peace with God and man, disciplines himself, strives to always be progressing toward holiness, works to make others upright, meets others' needs, especially without them knowing it.

That's a great joy. You can do that without that person knowing. That's fun. His liberal in giving to the church orders his life aright, will finish strong, will die in peace, and will anchor his family for generations to come, and I'm only naming a few of the characteristics.

Let me go back to one. The upright man strives to finish strong. In that regard, I want to mention David Flood.

I don't want to take a test this morning, but I'd bet a lot of money, if I was a better, and if I had money, that no one here has ever heard the name David Flood, unless you heard it from me. He was from Sweden. He felt God calling him to a life of a missionary in Africa, and then he meets a woman and falls in love, and she's got the same call on her life, and they get married, and they head to Africa.

[ 37 : 12 ] Now, this was a long time ago, beginning of the 20th century. the flood served under horrific conditions and became doubtful about their calling.

It was brutal conditions. They had a daughter, and then they had a son on the mission field. During the boy's birth, the mother died of complications.

For all of his efforts, while serving as a missionary, Mr. Flood had only one convert. A little black boy used to hang around the compound where they lived, and he was with him.

He wanted to spend all his waking hours with him, and he alone came to Christ. Defeated, Flood surrendered.

He returned to Sweden with his young son, but he was unable to bring his daughter, so she was given to another missionary family.

[ 38 : 22 ] Can you imagine? That couple soon died, and the girl was then taken in by yet another missionary family who eventually returned to America with her.

They raised her as her own. They were her parents, but she knew about her father. When a daughter was in her 30s, she told her husband that she felt God wanted her to travel to Sweden and look for her father.

She did so, and she found him in a run-down building. His small apartment was filled with empty whiskey bottles.

He was a hard alcoholic, and he was dying of cirrhosis of the liver. When she went in, he was passed out. She had to kick the bottles away so as not to fall. She poured coffee down him and sobered him up, which took a few days, before he finally realized she was his daughter.

They talked over the next several days. He said, I'm a total failure. I'm a dying alcoholic.

[ 39 : 44 ] I have less than six months to live. He said, I failed as a missionary. I thought it was my calling, and I failed. He said, I killed your mom down there through impregnation, and for all of his troubles, he said to her, I only had one little nine-year-old black boy as my sole convert.

All that effort, all the expense, all the training, all the agony, one little boy. Then he said to his daughter, I wonder whatever became of him.

When I'm not drunk, I think about him. Give me a moment.

His daughter said to her dad, he's grown now. He's the greatest evangelist in black Africa.

And he has founded 1,200 churches. Through his efforts, God used that little convert to lead thousands to the Lord.

[ 41 : 12 ] Thousands. David Flood gave up drinking. He lived Christian life for six months.

He witnessed to his friends. He witnessed to his family. He witnessed to the alcoholics that he had lived with, camped out with, and six months later he died.

He finished strong. Strong. My brothers, men of upright character who anchor their families finish strong.

I want to give you briefly two examples of godly anchors. Two examples of a godly legacy. perhaps three. Jonathan Edwards was arguably the greatest theologian ever produced on American soil.

[ 42 : 16 ] He was a Puritan preacher in the 1700s. He and his wife Sarah had 11 children. There was another man who lived in the same time frame.

His name was Max Jukes. He was a notorious criminal. A couple of historians traced their legacy. The legacy of both these men and they came to some startling results which they published.

Edwards' descendants included one U.S. vice president, three U.S. senators, three governors, three mayors, 13 college presidents, 30 judges, 65 office holders, and 100 missionaries.

Max Jukes' descendants included seven murderers, 60 thieves, 50 prostitutes, 130 criminals, 310 paupers living off public welfare, and 400 physically wrecked people because of indulgent living. On today's money, Jukes and his descendants cost the public hundreds of millions of dollars in prisons and other expenses.

[ 43 : 46 ] a father's leadership can have a profound impact on his descendants and on a nation for good or bad, even after he's gone.

there's a lot of anchors still active but they're in glory. They're still an anchor for you. I want to close today by reading a couple of brief notes to you, brief letters.

No one in this room ever knew this man. consider these words that live on in the hearts of his descendants. Dear brother and family, I resort to my pen one more time in life for the purpose of communicating a few lines.

My brother, I'm glad that your prayers are with me in Bud and Mary's behalf. I talk to them a good deal about their salvation but they keep putting it off until another time.

I would love to see you both so we can talk about the Bible. There is no one to talk about the Bible here. I have people in the area that practice their religion that I have to contend with.

[ 45 : 08 ] They won't have the Bible. They depend altogether on their denominational papers for an argument. You can judge for yourself how the argument goes.

The Bible is all I want and all I have. I remain your brother. That man continues to anchor his family down to this day and that letter was written in 1874.

That's 144 years ago. this December to be exact. The author was an anchor for his family and continues to be an anchor for his family and to the loved ones down to at least seven generations. The man died in 1920. And here I am 94 years later talking about his continuing influence on his family.

And why do I even bring it up? That was my grandfather. That was my grandfather. These boys great-grandfather, these girls great-great-grandfather, Civil War veteran.

[ 46 : 28 ] That goes back, doesn't it? And yet I've got his letter and I still talk about it. I saw a brief note stuck in the Bible of an old family Bible between the pages.

It surfaced for about a quarter of a century after this lady passed away. Here's what it said. Real brief. I leave this note in my Bible for a reason.

I want to say to all who read it that I believe in God. I also believe in Jesus and his shed blood on the cross.

I hope my sons and my grandchildren will read this book and be saved. That is my prayer.

She died in 1965. That note was found around 1985, maybe a few years later. And that was my grandmother.

[ 47 : 46 ] That was my grandmother. An anchor to this day for her children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren and great-great-great-grandchildren.