



-- Godfather Introduction

- Video Clip – You’ve Got Mail
- I realize that the Godfather movies, although very inappropriate for younger audiences, are extremely well made. But why is there so much reverence for the character of the Godfather himself?
- His marriage is a mess, his family is constantly in danger, he is seldom at peace, his empire is constantly in jeopardy, his days are filled with anger and schemes and violence, and...oh yeah...he is a thief and a murderer.
- The wise father seeks not to be like the Godfather. Rather, he seeks to be a godly father.

Four characteristics of the godly father:

1.) The godly father knows the stakes. (Chapter 23)

A. Illustration – We men know the stakes when it comes to sports.

1. Lakers Magic, Game 2, Blown layup blows the series.
2. About sports, we constantly say, “This is a big game,” or “This is a crucial 3rd down,” or “Everything rides on this putt.”
3. But to be godly fathers, we must know the stakes when it comes to our families.

B. The stakes are higher than we can imagine. The difference between blessing and curse is infinite and intense.

1. The Blessings of Those Who Choose God

- a. God fights for us, destroys our enemies, and nothing will prevail against us. (v. 3, 5, 9-10)
 - i. Christ’s atoning sacrifice destroys our sin and redeems us forever.

- ii. 1 John 3:8 – *“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.”*
- b. God welcomes us into the Promised Land and gives us His inheritance. (v. 4-5)
 - In Christ, we are made children of God, citizens of heaven, and co-heirs with Christ.
 - 1 Peter 1:3-4 – *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you.”*
- c. Everything God has promised us will prove perfectly trustworthy. (v. 14)
- 2. The Curses of those Who Choose the World
 - a. God will not defend them. (v. 13a – *“no longer drive”*)
 - b. The world they love will be the snare that traps them. (v. 13b)
 - 1 John 2:15-16 – *“If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world-- the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.”*
 - c. They will be punished. (v. 13c – *“whips...thorns”*, v. 15, 16 – *“anger”*)
 - 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 – *“When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.”*
 - d. They will perish in hell, forever separated from God. (v. 13d, 15, 16)
 - Revelation 20:15 – *“If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”*

C. Application Questions

1. *Does the way you live demonstrate that you understand what really matters in this life?*
2. *Do the highest priorities of your family reflect the highest stakes of life?*

2.) **The godly father teaches the truth.** (v. 24:1-13)

- A. Joshua uses his last words to remind the people of who God is and what He has done for them.
- B. Joshua emphasizes that God is the sole source of every good gift.

-- James 1:17 – “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights.”

C. It is the father’s responsibility to make sure his children learn the truth of God’s Word (not the pastor’s or the Sunday School teacher’s).

-- Ephesians 6:4 – “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”

D. Application Questions

1. *Are our children more acquainted with the ideas of the world or the truth of God’s Word?*

2. *Are you making every effort to teach your children the truth of God?*

3.) **The godly father takes a stand.** (v. 24:14-15)

A. The godly father fears the Lord. (v. 24:14a)

1. Fearing the Lord means having such great love and reverence for God that we are mortified at the thought of dishonoring His name.

-- v. 23:11 – “So be very careful to love the LORD your God.”

2. Fearing the Lord means understanding that He is the only one with ultimate power to save or destroy.

-- Matthew 10:28 – “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

B. The godly father serves the Lord with all faithfulness. (v. 14b)

1. He doesn’t just talk about God; he puts his beliefs in motion.

2. v. 23:6 – “Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left.”

3. James 2:17 – “Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

C. The godly father forsakes the world. (v. 14c)

-- v. 23:7 – “Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them. You must not serve them or bow down to them.”

D. The godly father gets off the fence. (v. 15)

1. He desires the Lord above all else. (v. 15a)

2. He chooses the Lord above all else. (v. 15b)

3. This choice is not just for him, but for his whole family. (v. 15c)

a. Fathers, whether we like it or not, God expects us to lead our households.

b. Godly fatherhood will never happen on accident.

c. We will be held responsible for how we lead.

E. *What would your family say is the most important thing in your life and in your home?*

4.) The godly father makes it stick. (v. 19-31)

-- Illustration – Gymnastics – A gymnast never gets a high score from the judges unless he sticks the landing.

A. Godly fatherhood requires much more than a choice; it requires complete commitment. (v. 23:8)

B. Joshua reemphasizes what's at stake. (v. 24:19-20)

C. Joshua implores the Israelites to take a stand. (v. 24:20-27)

D. Even in his absence, Joshua's followers were faithful in serving the Lord. (v. 24:31)

E. *What are you doing to point your family to Jesus Christ?*

-- The Godfather is well known for his devotion to the family business. The godly father is known for his devotion to Christ.