

Week of June 21, 2021: A Perseverant Father



Discussion Questions Set #1

“Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth.” (Psalm 127:3-4)

“Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” (James 1:12)

We used that analogy of archery to help us discuss the role of fatherhood – and spiritual leadership in general – in sermon, suggesting that an ability to persevere under pressure – to bend without breaking – is a key quality necessary. The key principle presented was that we ought to manifest a spiritual flexibility rooted in a sincere acknowledgement of and trust in God’s cosmic sovereignty.

1. Discuss this analogy for a moment. What does a spiritual flexibility look like as we follow Jesus? How might too rigid a construct of faith be a detriment to one’s ability to persevere? How might too flexible a construct be equally problematic?
2. In sermon, it was suggested that as followers of Jesus we have been crafted, as a bowyer forms a bow, for a Kingdom purpose. Discuss the following ideas and their “spiritual” application in our lives:
 - a. The experience of being crafted by God
 - b. The inherent tension present in the “bow”
 - c. The added pressure exerted on the bow when fired
3. How might viewing our role as on one of stewardship in regards to our children – or other blessings we have received from God - help us remain spiritually flexible? How might viewing these things as arrows in God’s hand affect one’s approach to them? How might we balance our holding and supporting of our arrows with our purpose to launch such arrows? How does this affect the view of our role in parenting/spiritual leadership/use of our blessings?

Discussion Questions Set #2

“Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.” Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.” (Genesis 22:1-4)

“By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.” (Hebrews 11:17-19)

In sermon, we learned that Abraham’s trust was so fully placed in God that he was confident that God’s direction to him would be of blessing not only to him, but also to Isaac, even when that seemed counterintuitive. To borrow from our analogy, he trusted the archer’s aim so implicitly that he remained flexible under strain, even though he might have questioned God’s aim.

1. Why is this sort of trust helpful to the development of perseverance – whether as a parent or otherwise?
2. Discuss how trust, even when seemingly counterintuitive, might function in the life of the follower of Jesus. How do you balance “counterintuitive trust” with “logic and/or intuition”?
3. In sermon, I suggested that, in terms of my own trust of God, my obedience is often too dependent on God revealing to me His target. When you think of your own trust of God, what “tension points” are you most aware of?

Discussion Questions Set #3

“The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand.” (Psalm 37: 23-24)

“For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.” (2 Timothy 1:7)

1. Discuss, one last time, the intersection of confidence and perseverance. How does our confidence in God strengthen our ability to persevere?
2. How might this confident perseverance be of help to our witness to the community around us?