

# WILL THEY STAND



Parenting Kids to Face the GIANTS

KEN HAM

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Dedicated to our family:

Our son Nathan and his wife Kristy, and their children Malachi and his wife Abigail, Kathryn, Noah, Madelyn, Emma, and Olivia. Our daughter Renee and her husband Bodie, and their children Kylie, Caleb, Lacey, and Lexi. Our daughter Danielle and her husband Joe, and their children Nicole, Kendra, Declan, and Lillianne. Our son Jeremy and his wife Susan, and their children Josiah, Amelia, Tiberius, and Baby Girl (our #18 grandchild), and our “California girl,” our daughter Kristel.

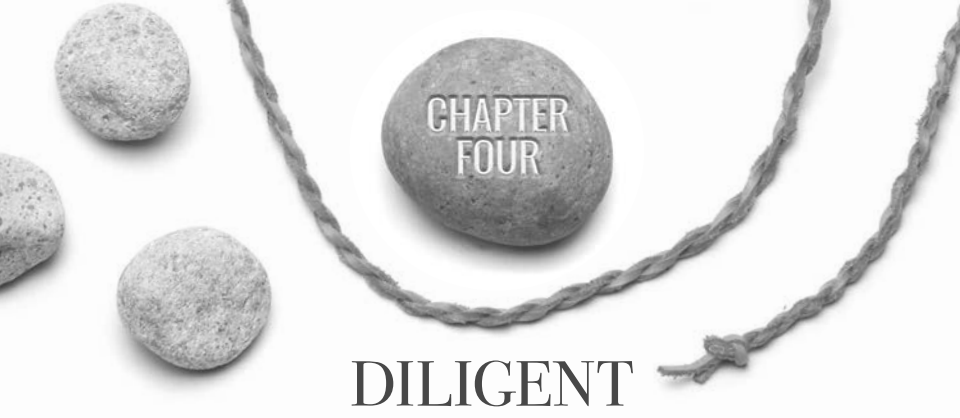
*Ken and Mally Ham*



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## DILIGENT

## DADS



This chapter will deal with the role of the father and the next chapter largely with the role of the mother. The perspective you will gain is very important, for the ideal situation in a family is two parents working toward the same goals in a way that complements each other's strengths and compensates for each other's weaknesses. If that is not the case, and you are doing this solo (which can be the case for many different reasons), you'll still appreciate a deeper understanding of the complete task that lies ahead. At the end of the next chapter, we will pull it all together and give you an opportunity to make a definitive commitment to leaving a godly legacy. And for those in a situation less than what God's plan for the family is, I believe God will give a special measure of grace to help you in this vital task.

Much confusion exists on the topic of parental roles — and where there appears to be clarity, so often it is wrapped in so much cliché that the practical applications become lost in meaningless rhetoric. So let's look to God's Word for clarity on this vital topic.

Let me start with an idea that is both simple and profound: God has a special plan for you. Please let that thought soak in. God has a special plan for you. That is something that people have been telling me my whole life. I believe it, and I'm telling you the same now. You are not here by accident or by chance. You are here as part of a greater plan — it's a plan God has prepared, and it's a plan that involves you.

My mum has told me that when I was just a babe, a snake nearly attacked me while I sat in a stroller. Mum grabbed me and pulled me to safety. As a child, I was very sick. Several times, my parents had to take me to the hospital for life-threatening emergencies that required driving through the rutted outback and forging flooded rivers to get me to help, but my mum always felt that I would be okay. She somehow knew that God had some sort of special plan for me. As a teen, my grandma (we called her Nana) also told me this, and sometimes



when I would read the Bible out front in church, others would say the same. I've come to believe that God does have a special plan for me, just as He has one for you. In His marvelous Word, He has made that plan known, calling us to be diligent dads and mothers of faith.

### *Diligent Dads*

Throughout the Scriptures, our special roles and responsibilities are revealed. Consider these piercing passages directed to fathers:

The father makes known to the children your faithfulness (Isaiah 38:19).

Fathers . . . bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).

For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him (Genesis 18:19).

These are just a few of the many verses that mention fathers in regard to training children. There

is another passage of Scripture that I want you to read carefully. Note the words that are emphasized in bold:

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our **fathers** have told us. We will not hide them from their **children**, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our **fathers** to teach to their **children**, that the next generation might know them, the **children** yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their **children**, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments (Psalm 78:1–7; emphasis added).

Psalm 78 is a long one, but I encourage you to read it through, and even write it down and keep it as a bookmark as you are studying this book. The psalm is saying over and over: Fathers, teach your children so they'll not forget to teach their children, so

that they might not forget what God has done and keep His commandments.

Sadly, in other parts of Psalm 78, we read that the Israelites did forget the works of God. They ended up adopting the pagan religions of the day and fell into sin because the fathers did not teach the children. One of mankind's biggest problems is forgetting what God has said or done. In the New Testament, Peter says over and over again, "I want to put you in remembrance of these things." Paul makes the same sort of statements. Why? Because God knows we are only too apt to forget.

A pastor once said to me, "My congregation has seen your videos, and some went to a creation seminar a couple of years ago. Do you think they need to come to the seminar you're running in the area?" I answered, "Pastor, how many of your congregation remember what you preached last Sunday?" The pastor replied, "They'll be at the seminar!"

If you have read the Old Testament, you are familiar with the accounts of the Israelites and how God did marvelous and miraculous things for them. Sadly, though, they kept forgetting what God had done for them, and then they would complain and end up in trouble. When I read these accounts

to my children, they often used to say, “Dad, how come they were so stupid?! Why couldn’t they remember how God took them through the Red Sea, or gave them manna from heaven, or warned them with fire from heaven? What was wrong with them, Dad?”

Well, they had the same problem we have. In fact, we are no different from the Israelites. We are only too apt to forget. How many times have we heard a great sermon at church and been convicted to apply a particular biblical principle in our lives, only to forget the principle after a few days or weeks? Then one day we hear a message on the same biblical principle, and we are reminded of something we should not have forgotten. The great Psalms of the Bible begin with this admonition:

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night (Psalm 1:1–2).

Remember how the Israelites crossed the Jordan River under the leadership of Joshua? A miracle performed by God. What did God tell them to do in Joshua 4:1–9? He told them to take 12 stones

from what at that time of year was a fast-flowing river, from the bottom, and build a monument with the stones so that when their children asked, “What do these stones mean?” they would not forget to tell them what God had done.



Sadly, they do forget, and what happened with the Israelites stands as a warning for us. After Joshua and all the generation that lived with him died, the Bible records these words from Judges 2:10–13:

And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel. And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals. And they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the

land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them and bowed down to them. And they provoked the LORD to anger. They abandoned the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth.

The Israelites lost it — and in only one generation. How? Psalm 78 relates the sad event. The fathers forgot the great works God did for them, and they obviously didn't teach the children like they should have. Did the fathers have excuses? I'm sure they did, just like Christian fathers today who shrug off their responsibility with excuses like these: "The kids are going to church; they attend youth group; they go to a Christian school — they'll be okay." I believe the Israelite fathers assumed because they knew about the great things God had done, that their children would somehow know about these things. Such acts were basically taken for granted by the fathers, so they did not "remember" them by acknowledging them and communicating them to subsequent generations.

However, because we are born sinners, the truth needs to be taught carefully to each generation — our fallen human nature is such that we don't want

truth before God saves us, and we continually struggle with the desire to sin after. Romans 3:10–11 says that “as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God.’ ”

Therefore, it is absolutely vital that we continually remind our children and ourselves of the truth.

### *Role Reversal*

Let me ask you another question I have asked of thousands upon thousands of people at seminars and meetings in different parts of the world: In the majority of Christian homes in our Western nations, is it the father or the mother who trains the children spiritually? Who really is the spiritual head of the house? Who is taking the responsibility for teaching scriptural truths to the children? Who teaches them to pray and how to act as a Christian? Is it usually the mom or dad?

You know the answer I have been given on every occasion I have asked this question, don't you? I'm sure you would give me the same answer! In the majority of Christian homes, it is usually the mother, not the father, who acts as the spiritual head. (In too many cases, neither the mother nor the father is fulfilling the responsibility to train their children in the things of God.) In

the homes where some training is happening, the mother is usually the one that teaches, prays, and reads the Scriptures without her husband's help. *It's a reversal of God-given roles, and it's not right.*

Mothers seem to be taking on the leadership roles more and more, and fathers are opting out of this area all together.

This is one of the greatest problems that exists in Christian homes today. In the majority of Christian homes, it is not the father who is the spiritual head of, or the priest to, his family. Most fathers have neglected their biblical role as the spiritual head. They have abandoned their responsibility.

Another consequence of this problem I have observed (and heard the same from parents as I have traveled extensively) is that there's a sore lack of spiritual young men in our churches. This then is a contributing factor to the lack of godly offspring in the coming generations.

### *Delinquent Dads*

One of the greatest travesties in our society today is that many fathers are not transmitting to the next generation the knowledge of God and His commands from the Word. What is even sadder is that



most fathers don't seem to know how to do this. They don't know what it means to be the spiritual head of the house. It appears that many of the fathers of the past did not transmit this knowledge to the present generation and now we have a generation of fathers that has very little, if any, understanding of what the family is all about, and so few have trained them or modeled to them spiritual leadership or how to be a Christian father.

Because the legacy has been broken, men in general don't know why they should lead (they are missing that compelling conviction and the significance of their God-given roles), and they don't know how to lead. I have had fathers come up to me and tell me that their father did not read to them or teach them or pray with them. They almost feel "sissy" doing this with their children because the strongest males in their lives didn't model any of it. Their image of masculinity is missing the spiritual component. Many Christian dads have been given no tools, no blueprint, and no materials with which to build their legacy . . . and because many know they should be leading, they are left with heavy guilt and feelings of inadequacy.

In many homes, the fathers won't (or think they can't) be the spiritual head and deliberately leave

it to their wives. I do praise the Lord for the wives who take on the task to ensure their children obtain biblical training. Some wives have told me they have pleaded with their husbands to head up the spiritual training in their homes — but many times to no avail. But then there's also a problem that some wives want to be the head of the family. That's another issue we will take up in the next chapter.

This is in direct disobedience to what God has clearly commanded. Dad, are you the spiritual head of your family? If not, let me warn you about something here. There are serious consequences that arise out of this neglect, and one of the most grave is homosexuality. I have a good friend in Australia who ministers to men caught up in the homosexual movement. He, and others who are involved in this counseling, tell me that there is a very definite correlation between a domineering mother in the home, together with a lack of male leadership, and boys turning to homosexual behavior.<sup>1</sup> (This doesn't mean that those who choose to sin in this way are not personally responsible for the decision to do so, but it does show how our parenting can contribute to the choices they make.) If we don't

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1. [https://fathersforlife.org/dale/childhood\\_of\\_homosexual\\_men\\_ToC.htm](https://fathersforlife.org/dale/childhood_of_homosexual_men_ToC.htm).

do things God's way, there will always be negative consequences.

As a teacher, I taught my students that the only basis for marriage was in the Bible, back in Genesis. I taught them that sex outside of marriage was against God's rules. I explained to them that marriage made them one with their spouse, just as Adam and Eve were one flesh. I showed them that God, as their Creator, had complete rights over their lives, and that if they wanted their marriage to work, they needed to obey the rules for marriage — the rules set up by the One who created marriage in the first place. Of course, for Christians, I showed them from Scripture they could never even consider looking at a man or woman as a prospective husband or wife if that person was not also a Christian. I'm glad that I got to share this with my students, but quite frankly, it wasn't my job or responsibility. Teaching the children is the job of the dad. I believe that the more fathers obey the Scripture in this area, the more Christian families can be on fire for the Lord as they were created to be.

The challenge for every father is to pass on the spiritual inheritance you received from your family (if you were blessed enough to receive one) or to re-create a lost legacy if the fathers before you

neglected to do so. Remember, regardless of the past, the future is your responsibility. You might have some good excuses, but the excuses end here. God says it's your job no matter what.

Remember Psalm 78? Dads, you are to be diligent to impart the knowledge of God to the next generation, period. You can easily learn to do this. We will show you how to get started shortly, but you must be committed. If you are more interested in your business or football or television, if you are giving your best to your career and come home at night too tired to even bother spending time with your children (let alone pray and read the Word with them), then you are making a big mistake. Who is really training your kids? The TV? The kids across the street? The internet? Video games and movies? Dad, don't stick your head in the sand on this one. You've only got one shot at this. Don't let the opportunity to train your children pass you by . . . the stakes are just too high for everyone.

At one church I was speaking at, a man came up to me with tears in his eyes and said, "Please, I have three children, I want to train them properly, but I don't know how. No one has ever trained me to be a father. Please can you help me?" This man (and many others) is one of the reasons I believe that the

Lord has burdened me to write this book. I want to help fathers to know what God thinks about training children. The great scientist Johannes Kepler allegedly said something like, “I want to think God’s thoughts after Him.” When it comes to building a godly legacy, we are wise to want to think God’s thoughts as well.

You can read all sorts of books and take all sorts of classes on parenting and being a spiritual leader, but when it all comes down to it, the very most important thing you can do is just do it.

You are never going to do it perfectly, so you might as well just jump in and start. Here are some simple things that you can do right now that will help begin making a huge difference in your family:

1. Pray with your wife. This may seem awkward at the start, but again, just do it. Pray before meals. Pray in bed at night. Pray together for each of your kids as they sleep.
2. Pray for and with your kids. Bedtime is an ideal place to get started. When you get them tucked in, just take them by the hand and let them listen as you thank God for them and ask for His blessings on their lives. (They love that!) Ask them if they have any requests

that you can pray for. In time, ask them if they want to pray out loud with you, but let them know that God always hears their silent prayers, too.

3. Study the Bible. Start reading your Bible where your family can see you. (You don't want to do this for show like the Pharisees; you do it as an authentic model for your family.) Then start reading it to them. A good place to start is Genesis 1-11 — the foundation of the rest of the Bible. Also study the Psalms or Proverbs. If it's December, start with what we call "the Christmas Message" — the babe in a manger. If it's spring (in the Northern Hemisphere), read the passages pertaining to Easter — the death and Resurrection of our Savior. Start in Revelation. Start anywhere you want — but do it in a planned way — using a particular book of the Bible, verses pertaining to a particular subject, etc. In time, let them read it to you . . . you're training them to continue the legacy with their future family, remember? You will have a lifetime to get better at it, but most importantly, just start NOW!
4. Teach them apologetics and to learn how to think foundationally. I will explain this in

another chapter. Obtain Answers in Genesis<sup>2</sup> resources to help you with this.

5. Go to a good church and get plugged in. You might have to search for a while to find one that really ministers and teaches according to the Word of God. You might have to leave the church where you've been a member for decades, but find one that upholds the content and the authority of the Bible, and just start going there. (Remember, if you're looking for the "perfect" church, don't join it because you'll spoil it! There is no "perfect church," but it is so important for the family to be a part of a local church — one that really upholds the truth of Scripture.)

Have fun and, yes, you will make lots of mistakes — but just do it. Because when you are long dead, will your children and children's children remember you as the spiritual head of your house who poured out sacrificial love? Will they remember that the Bible was the axiom and foundation of your home? Will they remember you for your stand on biblical authority and your love for them as you trained them to be godly offspring in this fallen world?

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2. [Answersingenesis.org](http://Answersingenesis.org).

Be a diligent dad. Do it for the sake of your kids and future generations. It's your role, and it's the right thing to do.

**Key thoughts from this chapter:**

1. The Bible tells us that we are, and have, forgetful children. The father of the home must constantly remind his household of God's goodness and truth.
2. Spiritual headship is the responsibility of the father. Too many fathers have become delinquent dads who are not fulfilling their God-given role.
3. Now is the time to begin. Pray with your wife and children, read the Bible together, and get involved in a good church. Take the initiative now; later is too late.
4. Forget being perfect and just do it! When you fall short or forget, just get up and do it again. In the long run, your efforts will make a huge difference.



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