

## Admirable Fathers

**Acts 14:8-17 HCSB** In Lystra a man without strength in his feet, lame from birth, and who had never walked, sat (9) and heard Paul speaking. After observing him closely and seeing that he had faith to be healed, (10) *Paul* said in a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he jumped up and started to walk around. (11) When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in the form of men!" (12) And they started to call Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the main speaker. (13) Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the town, brought oxen and garlands to the gates. He, with the crowds, intended to offer sacrifice. (14) The apostles Barnabas and Paul tore their robes when they heard this and rushed into the crowd, shouting: (15) "Men! Why are you doing these things? We are men also, with the same nature as you, and we are proclaiming good news to you, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, **who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything in them.** (16) In past generations He allowed all the nations to go their own way, (17) although He did not leave Himself without a witness, since He did good: giving you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, and satisfying your hearts with food and happiness."

Admiration is an interesting thing. The dictionary defines it as "a feeling of pleasure, wonder and approval". I think that most men want their children to admire them in one sense or another. I mean I want my children to take pleasure in me as their father, I want them to have a sense of wonder at how I live my life or how I deal with things and I want them to give their approval of me as their father. Certainly as children are growing they won't always have those feelings but once they are grown and maturing I want them to look back and be able to say "I admire my father". This morning we are going to look at four attributes worth admiring in Paul as well as all men, especially fathers.

Everyone can admire a man who...

### 1. Treats others compassionately. V. 9 (Eph. 4:31-32)

- **Acts 14:9 HCSB** and heard Paul speaking. After observing him closely and seeing that he had faith to be healed,

Paul looked intently and the man who was crippled. He saw his plight and pain but even more important he saw his potential. We can learn a lot from Paul's level of compassion toward this man.

- **Ephesians 4:31-32 HCSB** All bitterness, anger and wrath, insult and slander must be removed from you, along with all wickedness. 32 And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.

So often we go through life not paying attention to anyone else but ourselves. As fathers we can get so wrapped up in our careers that we forget the reason we have careers is to provide for our families. Our children go through so much these days. They face incredible pressures in school and from society. Often they have difficulties that we have trouble understanding. Sometimes they have pain hidden down deep inside. However we must look intently into their lives and see their potential. We must take time to treat our children and others around us compassionately.

### 2. Speaks with authority. V.10 (Mark 1:21-22, 27)

- **Acts 14:10 HCSB** *Paul* said in a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he jumped up and started to walk around.

One of the things that set Jesus and His apostles apart from others of their day is that they spoke with authority.

- **Mark 1:21-22, 27 HCSB** Then they went into Capernaum, and right away He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and began to teach. 22 They were astonished at His teaching because, unlike the scribes, He was teaching them as one having authority. 27 Then they were all amazed, so they began to argue with one another, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."

They spoke like they knew what it was they were talking about. Of course this is not because of some secret knowledge they had. It was because they were speaking with God's authority and for His purposes. Today many misunderstand the concept of authority. They think this means they just order everyone else around. Psychologists have identified through thousands of studies that the most

detrimental style of personality for a father to have is high authoritarian and high disciplinarian. Now that is not to say that authority and discipline are bad things in fact it is just the opposite. Authority and discipline are good things but they must be the right kind of authority and discipline. The authority that we as fathers have does not come simply because of shared genetics. Our authority comes because God has commanded it to be so. He did it in the fifth commandment. Since it comes because of God's command it should also be used in accordance with His instruction. When we speak with God's authority according to His instruction we will have an attribute worth admiring.

### 3. Lives in humility. V. 15 (Romans 12:3)

- **Acts 14:15 HCSB** "Men! Why are you doing these things? We are men also, with the same nature as you, and we are proclaiming good news to you, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, **who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything in them.**

Paul and Barnabas were being honored as gods. The people had never seen such power displayed and wanted to show their respect. It would have been easy for many men to simply accept the adoration of these people and perhaps even take advantage of the people in this situation. Paul and Barnabas knew they were not gods nor were they worthy of worship. They showed true humility in confronting this difficult situation. They told the people that they were just like them and were nothing special.

- **Romans 12:3 HCSB** For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one.

Sometimes we can think too highly of ourselves and forget that every good thing comes from God. When we close that big business deal, finish that big project or land the big promotion and others around us shower us with compliments, it is easy to take all of the credit for ourselves. However if we are like Paul and Barnabas we will be quick to give all of the credit and praise to God and point others to Him. We ought to live in humility always acknowledging that God is the one who is working in and through us for His glory and purpose.

### 4. Shares His testimony. V. 16-17 (Deut. 6:4-9)

- **Acts 14:17 HCSB** although He did not leave Himself without a witness, since He did good: giving you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, and satisfying your hearts with food and happiness."

Paul rightly said that "He did not leave Himself without witness". Paul had shared that God is living, creator, merciful, good, and provider. He was bearing witness of who God is and what He had done. Paul is not the only one who is called to give testimony or witness to God.

- **Deuteronomy 6:4-9 HCSB** "Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One. **5** Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. **6** These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. **7** Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. **8** Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. **9** Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

We too are called to do the same thing. Jesus referred to believers as salt and light. This means we must bear witness to who God is and what He has done.

### Conclusion

Unfortunately there are few people in today's society that our children can look to with admiration. That is truly a sad thing. However I believe it is better to have people in our homes that children can admire and that would be Godly mothers and fathers. We can't blame society for not providing admirable role models if we ourselves have failed to show attributes to admire.