

Dads are different than moms. Despite that the world tells us that gender is malleable and changeable, that it's wrong to emphasize any differences as they are purely cultural, I firmly believe that everyone instinctively understand that there are differences. This past week we were even told by the white woman working for the NAACP that race is flexible. She is a blonde-haired Caucasian who claims to identify as a black woman. We live in strange times. Not only are there differences, but we would boldly proclaim that these are God-ordained differences. Sure there are female carpenters and there are male nurses. That's totally fine, but tell me this: how many male Avon, Pampered Chef and 31 reps do you know?

Here are some humorous examples of the differences between men and women.





**MOTHER**



**FATHER**



**MOTHER**



**FATHER**



**MOTHER**



**FATHER**



**MOTHER**



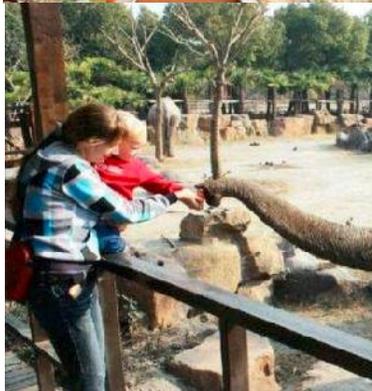
**FATHER**



**MOTHER**



**FATHER**



**MOTHER**



**FATHER**



**MOTHER**



**FATHER**



**MOTHER**

**FATHER**

Now do you think I could get away with showing these if the tables were turned? Could I show a bunch of pictures that show women in their worst light? Am I right—would you let me get away with dissing women? That’s OK, we guys can take it. But as I have said before, Mother’s Day messages are usually all about praising and encouraging moms but Father’s Day messages tend toward blasting fathers.

So even though the title of this message is “Wake Up Dads!” I don’t intend for this to be a dad-bashing message. The title was lifted directly from our text on Romans 13. Let’s read that now starting at verse 11.

*11 Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.*

Look at your text and tell me what a key word in verse eleven might be? In the ESV, the key word or phrase is “besides this.” Most translations just have the word “and” here but even that is a transition word. Paul means to link the next few verses with what he had just said. If you recall, our theme from last week was love from verse eight. *Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.* If we love one another, we won’t want to break the commandments which Paul listed. *“You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment...* So Paul wanted us to think about the commandments not from a negative perspective, of things which are forbidden but from the positive perspective—things which bring about more love. Another way of saying it is that your motivation for obedience is love and not fear.

Motivation is such an important factor in our behavior and decisions. Sometimes we do the right thing for the wrong motives. Service in the church can be a prime example. It is quite possible to serve and help others but we may not even be aware that we are ultimately doing it for selfish reasons. Maybe we like to be noticed by others. Maybe we are driven by a perfectionism that

almost unconsciously compels us to work hard. That can happen within the church or anywhere for that matter.

Any parent will tell you that children are motivated far more powerfully by positive rewards than they are by negative rewards. If you are ten years old, which would you choose?

Plan A: If you don't clean your room every day for the next two weeks, you will get a spanking and your electronics taken away for a week.

Plan B: if you do clean your room every day for the next two weeks, you will get a DQ blizzard as a reward.

Any psychologist will also tell you that adults are motivated by rewards more than they are by punishment. That's why bosses who scream and threaten are horrible people to work for. Even a great paycheck will often not be enough to endure such negative treatment.

But the Bible does use punishment as a source of motivation at times. Hell comes to mind as one such motivation. I am serious. The fear of the Lord is meant to motivate the unbeliever and reverent fear is meant to motivate the believer. There is a hint of that in this passage. The first and primary motivation is love. "Love does no wrong to a neighbor." But the secondary motivation is the topic of time. *Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.*

Waking from sleep implies what—that we are asleep, that we are not fully awake. In context, this was written to an entire church in Rome. Therefore, the implication is that anyone can be asleep, or not fully awake. There is application for everyone but I want to gear this application especially for dads.

When I think of slumber my mind immediately goes to Proverbs 24.

A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest,  
and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

How was all Scripture transmitted when it was first received? Since there was only one copy, it was intended to be read. And even if a few copies were eventually made, a church would only have one copy so Scripture was always read aloud. One person would read and everyone else would listen. Think of it this way: Ancient Israel and the first century were the very first audio Bible.

Yesterday we had the memorial service for Rose Schroeder, Jim's mom. Jim told me that his mom would listen to the audio Bible practically all day long. She would listen to when she went to sleep at night and as soon as she woke up she would start again. Rose was obviously thirsty for the Word of God. She drank deeply at the well of truth and hope. But I also love the idea that Rose took in the Word of God as it was originally done—by listening to it. She took in the Word like the very first Christians absorbed it—by listening to someone read it aloud.

So going back to Proverbs 24. I intentionally read the passage without much passion. But I am convinced that is not right at all. In my mind, the first line is meant to be read slowly, like you are sitting down in an easy chair or in a stack of hay.

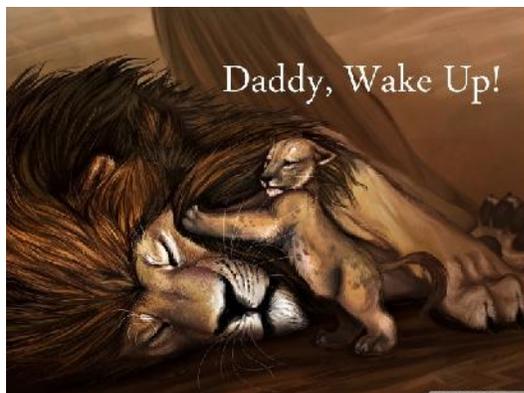
A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest,

It is to be read as if you are nodding off to sleep. But then the next line is meant to wake you up - with lots of volume and passion.

and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

This is how I see Paul's encouragement to wake up but in this case it is not material poverty that is upon us like a robber, but spiritual poverty. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God." I am not talking about that kind of spiritual poverty. The kind that Jesus spoke of was a person who recognized that they were spiritually bankrupt. This person lives every day with the realization that apart from Christ they can do nothing.

But the spiritual poverty in this passage is one of which the person is not aware. Like Proverbs says, it comes upon you like a robber. It steals your spirituality because you were asleep. You rested and slept and were grossly unaware that you were poverty stricken.



Like this painting, I would like the fathers to picture their children trying to wake them up. You can see the longing in the eyes of the lion cub. He wants his daddy. He needs his daddy. Fathers, your children need you. Yes, they need a father who will provide for them, who will spend time with them and love them unconditionally, but above all, they need a father who is passionately pursuing Jesus. My dad was a nice guy. It's not like we did everything together, but I know that I was loved. Home was a secure place for me in that regard. My dad was good, but he did not

know Jesus. But I knew that he didn't know Jesus. But one of the worst things you can do for your kids is to pretend that you know Jesus when you really do not. I am not saying that you are intentionally trying to be a hypocrite. But if you attend church and claim to follow Christ, be assured that your children know the truth. You are teaching them that faith in Christ is just something that you say but don't really do. You are teaching them that a slumbering faith is just fine. So don't just listen to me tell you to wake up. Picture your children saying, "Daddy, wake up!"

And why do we need to wake from our spiritual slumber? Three reasons.

### **1. Because Christ is coming**

Paul does not explicitly say that Christ is coming but that is the clear implication. Look at how

**Romans 13**  
Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

**1 Thessalonians 5**  
But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

this passage matches 1 Thessalonians 5. They use the same language—light and darkness, wake and sleep. Thessalonians speaks of “the day”—that day will not surprise you like a thief. And what day is that? It is the day of Christ’s glorious return. Therefore, when Paul said that “salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed,” he was referring to our final salvation at Christ’s return.

You might have noticed a little tension here. Thessalonians states

that this day will not surprise us like a thief and that we should “keep awake” but Romans warns us to “wake from sleep.” So which one is true? Let’s watch this video clip and see.

I like to show this every so often to pay homage to Brian Larrington’s childhood. This movie scared him silly when he was a little tike. As campy as it may have been, it is accurate. Unbelievers will be caught like a thief in the night at Christ’s return. But as Thessalonians states, believers will not be surprised in the same way. We know that Jesus is coming and when it comes to our salvation, we are already awake. But when it comes to daily living, we slumber and sleep and need to be awakened again and again. So both are true. We are awake but need to be awakened. It is like saying we are made holy through Christ but we are still growing in practical holiness.

When family is coming to visit, what do you do? You get ready, don’t you? You don’t pretend as if they are not coming but instead, you prepare for their arrival. If you could invite any living person to visit your house for a week, who might that be? One person who came to mind for me is Ben Carson, the famous pediatric neurosurgeon. If you have not read his book, *Gifted Hands*, or seen the movie by the same title, I encourage you to put it at the top of your list. He also happens to be running for president. I don’t know for sure if I will vote for him in the primaries—I may—but I think he would be an absolutely fascinating hoys guest.

When family visits, we always kick Kellyn out of her room and they get her room for the visit. But if Ben Carson were staying with us for a week, he’d get our bedroom. We’d clean it and clear it out for him. Karen would plan the best menu of her life. There are all kinds of things that we would do to prepare for his visit.

Dads, what are you doing to prepare for Christ’s “visit.” Does the knowledge of his return affect anything you do? “But it’s already been 2000 years and we have no idea when Jesus is coming.” That’s true. I really think that Paul would be surprised to know that Christ would tarry for 2000 years, but as Paul wrote: *salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed*. Every day

gets us one day close to his return and the expectation is that his future coming will have an effect on us today.

## **2. Because we are people of the light.**

*The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.* And to add the Thessalonians passage: *For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.*

You, Christian dad, have been enlightened. You are no longer walking in darkness. In Scripture, light and darkness are a prominent theme for good and evil, God and Satan. And it proves itself true. The majority of crime happens at night, literally in the shadows. Unless you work the midnight shift, you do not sleep during the day. The first three months Karen and I were married I worked the midnight shift in the hospital lab. To make matters worse, I had 40 minute drive home in the morning. I recall on more than one occasion pulling over to power nap on the way home. I don't know how people endure that shift long-term.

So if we are people of the day, we are supposed to live as if that were true. Which is why Paul wrote, *So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.* We are people of light who are hounded *by* darkness but we are not *of* the darkness so that we can cast off darkness. But how exactly do you do that?

## **3. Put on Christ and make no provision for the flesh**

*Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.*

OK, maybe we are pretty good at avoiding orgies and drunkenness but what about jealousy and quarreling? Those two do not usually make the top of our list of sins. We all know what a dramatic testimony sounds like, right? Like the kind that Unshackled records each week. They usually involve men and women who were caught up in orgies, drunkenness and sexual immorality but were delivered by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Just once I'd like to hear an Unshackled program or a testimony in church that talks about being delivered from jealousy and quarreling. Am I right? I'd like to hear this person describe how they were weighed down by a silent jealousy. I would rejoice to hear an honest confession about the inner heart of jealousy which affected all of their relationships. It would be wonderful to listen to someone speak of being delivered from such things. Even if we don't consider them as bad as the others on this list, God makes no distinction.

But the key is not to make any provision for the flesh. This is where it hits home for us dads. Our sons and our daughters need fathers who do not make any provision for the flesh. Someone told the story of a husband and wife who were actively serving in their church. The husband woke up one day and announced to his wife that he didn't want to be married to her anymore. I don't know what the wife is like and they did have some marriage problems before that, but I guarantee you that this husband had been making provision for his flesh before he announced he was leaving. At the very least, he was making provision for a spirit of discontentment and lack of hope. He had allowed himself to give up. He didn't have to be having an affair with another

woman to leave his wife. All he had to do was convince himself that he deserved something better than he had. Maybe he was caught up in lust or pornography or maybe he wasn't, but he allowed his mind and heart to wander.

There is more than one husband in this room who has done the same thing. There are countless ways to make provision for the flesh. That is any way that we make sin a little easier. As if sin needed any help, we are far too ready to oblige at times.

Look at this announcement I found on a church website.

“Is something missing from your life? Are you doing all you can to have a closer relationship with God? If you have a desire to learn more about God, then join us on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. in the lower level of the church. We look forward to seeing you!”



This was posted on the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church website. This is an advertisement for the very Bible study where nine people were gunned down four days ago. The senior pastor, Rev. Clementa Pinckney. He left behind a wife and two girls, Eliana and Malana. He went to his Wednesday night Bible study like he did every week but he did not come home. Rev. Pinckney was a man who was wide awake. He was not living in darkness but his killer clearly was. Did you hear that Dylann Roof almost changed his mind? Roof “almost didn’t go through with it because everyone was so nice to him.”<sup>1</sup> That was Rev. Clementa and the sweet ladies who were with him in the Bible study.

Eliana and Malana will not be able to wake up their dad any longer but I am certain that they were glad that they had a father who was so awake and walking with the Lord. He was a father who was sober-minded and awake. He was preaching the word. Even in the last moments of his life he was inviting strangers to drink at the well of truth, he was teaching the Word and loving people. Daddy, wake up. Your children need you.

Rich Maurer  
June 21, 2015

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<sup>1</sup> <http://hotair.com/archives/2015/06/19/charleston-shooter-tells-cops-everyone-at-the-church-was-so-nice-to-me-i-almost-couldnt-go-through-with-it/>