

Is There a Prophet in the House?

To be a prophet is to be God's mouthpiece. In your home, you are the primary mouthpiece of God. Like the prophets of old, your job is to speak on behalf of God. You bring God [His Word] to the people under your care.

Being a prophet is not an easy task. Nor is it for the faint of heart. Being a prophet isn't popular —you rarely tell people what they want to hear. Instead, you are telling them what they need to hear despite the surrounding noise.

Everything in your child's life is acting like a prophet. Thousands of false prophets are telling your children what they want to hear daily. From the false prophetess Disney to the country music prophet Kenny Chesney, most of what your family hears is a pro-humanistic, anti-god message.

To be clear, we watch Disney movies in my house. And we listen to Kenny Chesney; if I had a tractor, I bet my wife would think it sexy. I even met Kenny once in a Mcdonald's bathroom. Great guy, unbelievably short, maybe 5'3. We watch and listen, but neither Disney nor Kenny is the loudest voice in my house. I am.

As fathers, we must recognize that false prophets come in all shapes and sizes; they are everywhere. We can't shield our family from them. Instead of shielding our children from them, we need to drown out their voices. As you reflect Jesus as prophet, your voice needs to be the loudest voice in the house.

And it has to be because the world is a noisy place. Day in and day out, the world is telling your kids to "*be god.*"

Christian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky once declared, "*If God does not exist, then anything is permissible with man.*" Along with being a tremendous writer, Fyodor proved to be a very

capable prophet. Today we live in a profoundly post-Christian culture—a culture where the Bible is not only inaccurate, it is impossible. Our children are coming to age in what Nietzsche called the *"wake of God's death,"* a time when *"God is dead,"* and self reigns supreme. Daily our families are being told, "self is god."

Imagine growing up and sincerely believing that you are God. And yet this is precisely where our children are today. Our children are told they possess God's privileges, prerogatives, and power. They are growing up in a society where they can define themselves at every level. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer, intersex, pansexual, two-spirit, androgynous, asexual — *"You are who you say you are— your truth is your truth."*

"Live your truth" is the modern youth's mantra, one that sounds eerily familiar to the truth claim Jesus makes (Jn. 14:6) and the *"I Am"* statement God makes (Ex. 3:14).

God, of course, is correct in declaring *"I am"* because He is! God's self-defining declaration comes from His self-existence, a property belonging only to God. Yet, few today believe this. Our culture teaches that God is not self-existent, indeed, we are told that God is non-existent. If there is no one true God, then everyone is a god, and ultimately, self-definition becomes the mantra of the people. We see and hear it everywhere:

"You can be whatever you want to be." "Believe in yourself."

"Follow your heart."

"Trust your instincts."

"Live your best life."

All these wretched phrases are aimed at our children— words that inspire a self-definition that can only be born of self-existence. Our children are growing up in a world that tells them that they are self-existing, that they are God, and it is a lie straight from hell.

Satan wields the sword of self-definition because he knows it always leads to self-destruction. Just ask Adam and Eve. Self-definition destroyed the first civilization and has been destroying societies ever since.

Think about our modern-day prophets and the plight of our culture. Psychologists have redrawn the boundaries of the family. The High Courts have redefined marriage. Men and women have switched roles. Life has lost its sanctity. Self-actualization is the new sanctification. The Church is not immune; today, Churches look like amusement parks, and sermons sound like self-help seminars. The result? We are all becoming little gods, and the weight is unbearable. It is not by chance that youth anxiety and suicide are at an all-time high. Who can live under the pressure of being God, absent the privilege and power of actually being God? Placing the burden of godhood on a child is equivalent to dropping a house on them — it's an unbearable weight.

As prophet of your home, you need to offload this weight. You must speak words of truth that counteract the devil's lies:

"You can be whatever you want to be."

False — you can be who God has created you to be (Gen. 1:27; 5:2; Mark 10:6).

"Believe in yourself."

No thanks — believe in God's Word (Psalm 119:160; John 17:17).

"Follow your heart."

Horrible idea — follow King Jesus (Jeremiah 17:9).

"Trust your instincts."

Wrong — trust God and His Word (Psalm 20:7).

"Live your best life."

Nah—the best is yet to come (1 Cor. 2:9).

The aim of your life is not "*live your truth.*" The aim of your life is to live the truth of another, namely, King Jesus. King Jesus said, "*I am the way, the **TRUTH**, the life...*" (Jn. 14:6, emphasis added).

Your child doesn't need another truth; they already have one. Take the burden of godhood off your child, and help them see that there is only one "*I Am,*" and they're not it.

As prophet, the most important thing you can do for your family is share the truth of God's Word. This means you must be well-versed in God's Word. You do not need to be a trained theologian. You do not need to have a seminary degree. But you do need to know the Word. You need to read and have Scripture memorized. Always be ready to share what you've learned. You only have to be one step ahead to lead someone in God's Word.

Maybe you're a dad who is just now learning about God and His Word. That's fine. Share what you know. As you grow in your knowledge, so will those under your care. Howard Hendricks, bible professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, would often say, "*a bible falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't.*" As men, it is essential that we lead, guide, love, and shepherd our families. We do this primarily by sharing the truth of God's Word with them. The Bible tells us, as fathers, we must train up our children in the fear and knowledge of the Lord. Deuteronomy Ch. 6 makes the mandate practical; as a father, your life is a classroom, and you instruct your child, whether you know it or not.

Catechism For All

Though each context and the structure of our homes may be different, as dads, we can wield many of the same tools. One tool that has been used for centuries is the tool of catechism. A catechism is a summary of beliefs set in question and answer. Catechism helps shape and grow us in the things of God.

My children have benefited from catechesis for years. Many years ago, we began writing the "*Harper Family Creed*." Interestingly, I grew up in a denomination that opposed catechism and creeds. My ordination was full of "*no creed but the Bible*" participants. That statement is both accurate and shortsighted; without question, the Bible is inerrant, sufficient, and able to teach us everything we need to know to live a holy life. That said when asked, "*why creeds?*" My response was simple;

"The Bible gives us life and everything we need to grow... the creed helps us grow in the right direction. The vine doesn't need the trellis to help it grow; the trellis is there to help it grow in the right direction."

One of the most effective tools I use to help my kids grow in the right direction is the tool of catechesis. Children's minds gravitate to memorized facts. If your child can memorize the lyrics to "*Let it go*," they can memorize truths about God.

Teaching children biblical truth doesn't save them, but it does put them in the realm of grace. Memorized biblical truths stay with them long into adulthood and can be a tool in God's hand. Catechesis introduces children to the vital doctrines of Scripture and equips them with answers when the world begins to pound away at the door of their faith (hugely beneficial during their college years). Seeds of truth planted now have a fighting chance to bloom into a harvest of grace. I am catechizing my children today, so I might have something to reap tomorrow.

Beyond catechesis, there are other great tools. Storybook bibles, family devotionals, and books on family worship (anything by Dr. Joel Beeke is gold) all exist to equip you as prophet. As good as these tools are, nothing replaces the Bible. The Bible is, and always will be your guide — use it. Never forget your life is a classroom, every day, your family is watching and learning from you. Teach your children the truths of God. Speak them. Write them. Practice them. Every interaction can begin with

the Word or lead to Word. You're a prophet, and your kids can't hear it enough.