

# **PATRIARCHS**

By

JESS STRICKLAND



**LIVING HOPE FELLOWSHIP**

# THE PATRIARCH<sup>1</sup>

| ˈpɑːtri.ɑːrk |

noun

1 the male head of a family

a man who behaves in a commanding manner:

The most famous of all Patriarchs is Abraham, for before Abraham was called to do anything else he was called to be a "Patriarch."

*"Yes, I've settled on him as the one to train his children and future family to observe GOD's way of life, live kindly and generously and fairly, so that GOD can complete in Abraham what He promised him."*

No doubt, as the Bible well records, Abraham distinguished himself as one who behaved in a commanding manner.

## NOTICE THE NEED TO TRAIN SUPERCEDES THE FULFILLMENT OF PROMISES:

1. God Chose Abraham First as a Training Father and Grandfather ...

*"I have chosen him so he would command his children and his descendants to live the way the Lord wants them to ..."* NCV

2. Only Then Could God Fulfill All He Promised ...

*"Then I, the Lord, will do for Abraham what I have promised him."* NIV

We are "patriarchs," not merely teaching our children, but teaching them to "observe," "obey," "to command, charge, give orders," (*Strong's* enhanced) "to give direction, decree, i.e., state with force/authority what others must do." (DLB) No messing around here, God is clear. Abraham was chosen to train his children in a commanding way to obey the Lord's way of life.

## ABRAHAM AS A PATRIARCH ...

1. He received his son as a gift from God ... Psalms 127:3
2. He marked Isaac with a covenant scar ... Genesis 21:4
3. He separated his son as a full heir ... Genesis 21:12 (Genesis 16:16; 21:8 age of Ishmael, 15 years an adult)

4. He kept his son from cultural corruption ... Genesis 24
5. He passed on the divine blessing to Isaac ... Genesis 25:5,11

## **WHY DO TODAY'S CHILDREN NEED A PATRIARCH?**

Children need a Patriarch, because Patriarchs, more than anyone else, have the potential to develop the character of their children. The fact is, people of character live more satisfying, full, and enjoyable lives. As Dr. Townsend says "A person's character is one's destiny."

Imagine, your child's character will determine his/her destiny. God, knowing this, commanded Abraham—"shape your children's character so that you can possess the destiny that I have promised (Strickland paraphrase)." No transferring of character, no inheritance.

### **WHAT IS CHARACTER?**

What is character anyway? In the past I have used two words to define character: competence and clarity. The competency to do what God has built you to do and the clarity to know what His will is. Let's use two different but related phrases to define character.

**TAKING RESPONSIBILITY**—The ability to clarify what one owns, free from blame shifting and excuse making.

Because children begin life having everything given to them, if we are not careful they begin to think that life is about what is supplied by another instead of through another. God does not provide for us apart from labor and obedience, so children must learn to take appropriate ownership of their lives so God can supply for them through the acts of their obedience.

We are accountable for what we own. If I own a house and I am a responsible person, I will take care of that home in a special and unusual way—I will care about the outcome. So when a child becomes responsible, she becomes accountable for the outcome of her life. As she will become responsible for her emotions, moods, tone, actions, choices, skills, thoughts and desires. Therefore she can no longer blame others for what is her responsibility. She has a clear picture of the perimeters of her life, "this is my responsibility."

**EXERCISING SELF-DISCIPLINE**—What is self-discipline? The ability to say no to the temptation to become reckless and irresponsible without the aid of someone else's prompting.

© livinghope 2009

A child begins with no self-discipline, it must be imposed upon them by another—that is what being a Patriarch is all about—the skill of imposing appropriate discipline on someone until they learn to impose it on themselves.

A person of self-control has learned that unbridled passion will develop bad behavior that will be harmful and destructive. Next, a person of self-control keeps impulses in check doing the right thing because they have a good handle on reality and they know that self-control leads to positive results. Decision-making and actions free of lust lead to positive results while decision-making and actions based on lust lead to negative results.

More than any other calling, a Patriarch is called to build character, self-responsibility and self-control in their children. The Patriarch accomplishes this by setting up what we will call DOORS, WALLS and WINDOWS by which their children can learn character.

## **WHO DOES CHARACTER LOOK LIKE?**

There are ten principles essential for life transformation. Seek to change a life without one of these principles and you will end up unaffected, exactly the same as you were. The first of these principles is THE PRINCIPLE OF OBJECTIVE. It states that all character change has one goal in view: “to be Christ-like.”

*“For God knew His people in advance, and He chose them to become like His Son, so that His Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.” Romans 8:29 NLT*

No messing around here in any way, Patriarchs are given the charge to internalize character by transferring ownership and discipline to their children with the goal that they would become “Christ-like.” Who does character look like? “Jesus.”

## **PATRIARCH AS DOORS, WALLS AND WINDOWS**

**A DOOR**—is an opportunity that a Patriarch opens up to his children so they can, at the right time and in the right way, engage in the world beyond self and home. If a door is given too early to a child then that child will become demanding, develop an attitude of being entitled, and ungrateful; if a door is given too late, a child will become hopeless, insecure and a victim without ability to set goals.

**A WALL**—is that well-defined limit that defines the space and circumference of one’s life. A wall is erected to keep evil influences out while a door is created to determine when and for what cause a child will go out. The wall’s greatest purpose is to protect, to keep children safe spiritually, emotionally, socially, and physically, until they learn to take responsibility and self-control so that the walls become internalized in their own heart.

© livinghope 2009

**A WINDOW**—A window is a great source of light and vision, so a Patriarch uses windows to provide resources for their children, especially vision, for all blessing floods toward obedience to a vision. God as a Father said that He would open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing on His children they could not contain, in the same way a Patriarch pours out blessings on their children that they are unable to contain (Malachi 3:10).

A Patriarch is a DOOR, a WALL and a WINDOW, a Director (Prophet,) a Protector (Priest,) and a Provider (King.) He is the Door, Wall and Window for his children until the DOOR, THE WALL AND THE WINDOW have been internalized into the hearts of his children so they can in turn be a DOOR, a WALL and a WINDOW to their own children.