

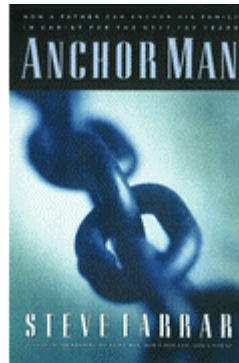
# *Anchor Man*

*How a Father can anchor his Family in Christ for the next 100 Years*

By Steve Farrar

## A Discipleship Class for Men

1. *Anchoring the Family Chain*
2. *It Takes More Than Sperm*
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If you thought your parenting responsibilities ended after eighteen years per child, you thought wrong. Instead, it's your privilege to lead your family – and influence succeeding generations – for a century ... or more.

*Anchor Man* presents the high calling of fatherhood, the traits of a Christian father, the adventures that await him as he interacts with his children, and the significance of his role as a good family man. Steve Farrar presents these roles and responsibilities in a way any man wanting to increase his understanding of his place in the family, and our society, can put into action every day.

*Anchor Man* encourages, exhorts, and demonstrates with biblical concepts how to raise a godly family and how to anchor that family in Christ for the next one hundred years. Farrar's unique teaching style blends humor and practicality with the tools fathers need to become all that God intended them to be as the leaders of their families.

*Notes from a men's small group discussion of this book by Steve Farrar.*

Stuart L. Brogden, April, 2001

**From:** Stuart Brogden

**Date:** Thu Jan 18, 2001 12:01 pm

**Subject:** Chapter One

Hello guys,

I pray you've read Chapter 1 and the study guide. As some of you gave what looks like work email addresses, I think it's a good idea to collect comments on the lesson and send them out by Thursday evening, so everyone can get their email before we meet. So far, we have two men who are following in the book and staying tuned in to our discussion via email only; your contribution could make a big difference in the life of a man you may never even see. Please keep in mind the opportunity to send a note to the group should the Lord lay it on your heart.

A couple of things jumped out at me in Chapter 1:

a.) The story about the bamboo that lays fallow for four and half years while being carefully tended is simply mind boggling. Keep in mind our efforts to carefully tend to our wife and children may seem to be of no effect for years yet have tremendous payoff "next year" or "next month". Read Galatians 6:9 and grow not weary in well doing.

b.) The picture of what an anchor does for the U.S. Eisenhower is impressive. That anchor **MUST** be hooked solidly on a rock that will not be moved. If you and I are to be "anchor men", there is only one Rock that will suffice - and He holds onto us! As you review the study guide, take the time to answer in writing the question on the top of page 250, ways to avoid becoming a "drifting father".

As you finish the study guide and list your strengths and weaknesses, consider the counsel of the Most High and prayerfully seek out two or three men who can hold you accountable in your spiritual growth. This is far too important to leave to chance or personal pride. The enemy has not given up and our hearts are deceitful. Pray for me - and ask me next Sunday night - that I honor the Lord with what I watch on the hotel room TV and my PC internet connection while I'm away from home.

Be ready for Chapter 2 next week - as Jesse Jackson has confessed only today, "It takes more than sperm" to be a father.

All honor and power to the King of kings, the Lamb who alone was worthy.

In His grip,

Stuart

**Date:** Thu Jan 25, 2001 12:51 pm

**Subject:** Anchor Man chapter 2

Greetings guys,

I thank God for your prayers for me while I was on travel. Back in Houston, physically and spiritually safe & secure in the everlasting arms of the Lamb.

Did you make it through chapter 2? If not yet, make sure you're through it and the study guide by Sunday night. It's not an easy read, but not much in this book is.

While most of us were likely smacked with the discussion on divorce (a warning well worth everyone's attention), did you catch the first of Farrar's "two lethal injections"? Illegitimacy. Kids born out of wedlock are more likely to grow up without a father than any other group. Commenting on Jesse Jackson's recent revelation, black columnist Larry Elder points out today "Men who father children and then take a hike create the moral equivalent of a drive-by shooting." Our Father certainly considers sex out of marriage a sin. How are we, as Christian men, responding to this issue? The "illegitimate" person in this situation is not really the child - it's the father.

Marriages are celebrated in the church. The church - which means us - needs to honor God by opposing divorce

and illegitimacy in the body. Divorce ought to be difficult to achieve. Men should get in one another's face if a brother is heading down one of these paths. Our love for one another does not keep us from confrontations, it requires it.

In the study guide - Are church activities on your list of "things which take you away from your family"? Have you considered the question "Why should you pray for something that is already working well?" Are you willing to be the man in your marriage and take the first step toward reconciliation or forgiveness EVEN IF "it's not your fault"?

On a Tony Evans message on fathering, he points out that God has a hierarchy for families and fathers are responsible to take the lead, period. After "the fall" in the garden, who did the Lord call for? Not Eve, thought both had sinned. "Adam, where art thou?"

Is He walking through the garden of your marriage, calling "Adam, where art thou?"

Be "Ward Cleave". Know that you can stand the tests of time and our fallen world because the One who authored your life and the marriage covenant you are in has given His word that He has given you everything you need to succeed in His plan for your life.

See you Sunday evening!

**Date:** Thu Feb 8, 2001 8:10 pm  
**Subject:** Anchor Man Chapter 3

Plymouth Rock Coaching Clinic

Have any of you heard of the "original" George S. Patton? Neither had I - an Army brat and former Army officer. Do not miss the point: though you and I may at times feel insignificant, only God's plan will reveal in His good time what legacy we lived. That is the "bank account" we should be concerned with.

The value of a godly legacy is another one or two links in the chain. If you are the "anchor man" in your family, you may not be able to see the links that your godly legacy helps build - until you leave your Earth suit behind. That is way God's Word tells to live by faith. If I live by what I can see, my oh my will I get discouraged. But God has a plan, not known by any man. And it ends by glorifying Him. At the end of our generational chain is not a big ship - it's the kingdom of God. We can glorify God by being faithful as an anchor or a link in the chain. In doing so, we will build a foundation for another generation of godly men.

Did your father fulfill his role? Most men fail in one regard or another. Our heavenly Father never fails. On Him alone can we depend in all circumstances. Where you dad and mine failed you and me, Abba Father fills the gap as the Father who keeps His promises. What one godly lesson did your father teach you by his life? My dad showed me, year after year, what it means to love your wife. Unashamed, publicly, without condition.

One way God can make up for our earthly shortcomings is by providing godly role models other than our father. If your skill as a godly father needs yet to be honed, ask your heavenly Father to lead you to a man He can use to help you on your way. HNW has many men who have stood the test of time and walked by faith with the Lord throughout difficult parenting trials. Seek - and ye shall find.

Where's the place for the biggest impact you can have as father? In your home, teaching your children God's Word and how to see His hand in all creation, to demonstrate love for Him by their obedience to Him in all things. For too long, we men have let church and school do too much teaching. Forgetting the Father's instruction that we are to train up our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Forgetting that the enemy has a plan for our family and he will not grow weary until the Lord Jesus snatched him by the tail and flings him to hell. Be constant, in season and out - firm in your knowledge of Christ and the truth of His written Word.

The Puritans were not confused about their God or their responsibilities to Him. We cannot honor His plan for our families unless we know Him as savior, serve Him as Lord, and honor Him as King. If we say we love Him and do not keep His commandments, our own words make us a liar. Brethren, our Father is very clear about our job as dads. It's tough, it takes a lot of energy and time. The rewards are often delayed by months or years. Many fathers in our generation and in our society have given up and quit. You and I don't have to do that. That God we love and

serve lives in us if we are in Him and by His might we are able to stand up under the load as fathers. The payoff for a job well done will last far beyond any promotion or award at work.

What a deal! God equips us to what He commands to do and He provides a rewards program no airline can match! Let us press on for the prize! The journey is before us – you are not alone. By the grace of God we will finish strong.

In His grip,

Stuart

**Date:** Thu Feb 15, 2001 6:34 pm

**Subject:** Anchor Man chapter 4

The toughest assignment anyone will have: being a parent. It is not enough to provide "stuff" for our kids. "Stuff" is easy to provide, it's the coward's way out. It takes more determination to deny stuff than it takes to provide it. And the irony is stuff never satisfies for more than a moment. Relying on stuff than biblical doctrine sets kids up for failure. In order to remain focused on the truth, we must recognize the reality of the spiritual warfare in which we play a part, knowingly or not. As Tom pointed out Wednesday night, life is not a playground, it's a battleground. And the enemy has a battle plan. So does our God.

The good news is that the Lord's plan is not hidden. It's written down in our language. All we have to do is read and heed.

As Farrar pointed out in this chapter, more than half of Christian kids are looking for answers. God has appointed men - fathers in particular - to instruct our kids and lead them to the answers. Knowledge of the TRUTH is essential, because the world is full of answers from the father of lies. Are we clear about the truth or are we fuzzy on God's Word? As preachers say, a mist in the pulpit is a fog in the pews, so is it in the family. If dad doesn't fear God and walk in His ways, the kids aren't likely to do so either.

Farrar mentioned in an earlier chapter his book, "Point Man - How a Man can Lead his Family". It's a great book to help any man sharpen his skills on how to lead his wife and kids through the enemy's jungle.

Did you like the way Farrar presented the Ten Commandments, as descriptions of a godly man? Does it describe you and me? I fall short - His Word says all of us do. What's a man to do when he can't measure up? Society tells us real men don't ask directions; real men don't read the instructions. The Bible says a godly man seeks wise counsel and obeys the Word of God. Why do we tend to follow what the fallen world tells us about how to live, rather than the One who created us and the world? This, then, is why we also need one another - to provoke one another to good works, to encourage one another to walk with Christ, to confront each other when we fall (or jump) into sin.

The old saying is that more values are caught than are taught. This chapter challenges us to live godly lives; to be men of integrity. Men who face up to the difficult task and trust God to lead and equip for the continuing battle and to never give up, never give up, NEVER GIVE UP.

I thank God for each one of you. Your heart for Jesus Christ, your humble spirit, your desire to know Him more deeply. We can make a difference - we ARE making a difference every day we live for Him. May we continue in His will, to bring Him all the glory.

In His grip because I simply cannot hold on,

Stuart

**Date:** Thu Feb 22, 2001 12:42 pm

**Subject:** Anchor Man chapter 5

NASCAR fathering has a graphic mental image: fast, crowded, competitive, dangerous. I was reminded by Dale Earnhardt's death that there is the danger of putting off until tomorrow what we should do today - forgetting that we do not know how long our heart will continue beating. NASCAR racing holds the danger of death. So does NASCAR fathering - spiritual death.

As an auto race has a finite time allotted to it, so do we as fathers. Just as a race can be ended early, so can our role as fathers. Hence the urgency of this present day! "behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Farrar points a finger at us and reminds the driven man that we are commanded by God to provide more than "things" - food, shelter, clothes - for our children. Just as our jobs require us to spend time at the office, with customers, etc., so our families require a serious commitment of our time. Your children will not see your heart without spending unstructured time - and lots of it - in your presence.

I like the story Farrar tells about the mountain guide in the Canadian Rockies. Having used map and compass to navigate unfamiliar terrain, I understand the context. How valuable we are as guides! Experience isn't the best teacher, but it certainly is the most costly one. Let us use ours to our children's benefit. The rat-race clamors for our time and energy. The world tells us the sacrifice is worth it. The old song by Cat Stevens, "The Cat's in the Cradle" puts this lie in the heart-breaking perspective of truth. Winston Churchill's life shows us that a person can survive and succeed a childhood of a father's neglect, but it also shows us the scars and heartache involved.

"Most of our peers are screwed up. The reason a lot of them are successful is that they are total and absolute failures on the home front. ... So why should I let them pressure me? I don't want to be like them and neither do you." We are fully aware of the danger of peer pressure on our kids - are we aware of the peer pressure on us? Are you and I aware of the decisions we make at work to pursue promotions and deals in the full context of what it will do to our family? If we are driven to work more, harder - to provide more stuff, let us pull up and evaluate our hearts. Calculate your time, control your time, capture your time. Otherwise, it will capture and control you.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

I thank God for your prayers for my daughter, Carole, as she heads to hospital tomorrow for her in-depth EKG. I should know Sunday evening what's going on.

Stuart

**Date:** Thu Mar 1, 2001 12:26 pm

**Subject:** Anchor Man chapter 6

Barbarians.

What a thought-provoking word. Have you ever thought of your kids or grandkids as barbarians or potential barbarians? What distinguishes between a "civilized" person and a barbarian? That's the question this chapter implicitly asks us, as we seek to raise a godly generation of young folks. I am drawn to Romans 1:18-32, wherein the Lord tells us how barbarians will behave. And why. Verse 30: "Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents" sounds like a cross section of the U.S.

I heard from Dennis Rainey a quote on the radio yesterday: "All fathers want to be honored, but not all fathers live honorably." If we are going to avoid the ravages of a barbarian generation, we must live a life that is honorable. A man of integrity is one whose beliefs & behavior line up with his bible. The good news is that the One who calls us to so walk promises to equip us for that journey, and He is not slack concerning His promises as are men.

What does chapter 6 tell us? Some of our kids are one the wrong path. We are responsible for some of their wrong

choices, but these kids are responsible for their actions. No matter how old our children are disobedience to God requires discipline. A lack of consequences to disobedience teaches lawlessness. Proper discipline is appropriate for the offense, appropriate to the age of the child, free of rage, designed to instruct, and communicate the love of the Father. Proper discipline takes energy, wisdom, unity between husband and wife, and a pure heart before God. When Brad was about 18 months old, Joan bought Dobson's book "Dare to Discipline". Highly recommended by Farrar and myself, along with Dobson's "Strong Willed Child".

God uses men such as Farrar and Dobson to teach us His Word. God uses the brotherhood of believers to keep men on track, because we are like sheep and tend to go astray. Eli didn't have an accountability group; his sons died for their disobedience. Ananias and Sapphira planned in secret, trusted no other counsel and died for their disobedience. I am in deep agreement with Farrar regarding the value of the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is to hate all evil (Proverbs 8:13). Do you and I hate evil or do we play with it? Do we understand what is evil and teach our children to hate it or do we walk unaware and teach our children to walk into the snares of the evil one?

Here's the acrostic (verses from "The Message") I've created for Brad's high school graduation celebration:

**B**ecome wise by walking with the wise; hang out with fools and watch your life fall to pieces. (Prov 13:20)  
**R**escue the perishing; don't hesitate to step in and help. (Prov 24:11)  
**A**n honest answer is like a warm hug. (Prov 24:26)  
**D**ear friend, if bad companions tempt you, don't go along with them. (Prov 1:10)

I pray that I would live out these verses and demonstrate my love for Christ by being obedient to His words. I pray that each of us would lay hold to His promises and walk worthy of the calling of Christ. How fast the years go by and how precious the opportunities are to teach godly wisdom to our kids. Redeem the time for the days are full of evil! Now is the acceptable day of the Lord. Let us encourage one another and declare by our lives that we are His, bought at a high price. Our children are less likely be interested in knowing Christ if our lives aren't worthy of study and imitation.

Joan, Carole and I are off to Shawnee, OK tomorrow to visit my grandmother. God willing, we will return Sunday afternoon. Thank you for your prayers for Carole. She has had one "episode" since we got the monitor, so maybe the doctors will be able to figure out what's going on.

May the Lord be your wisdom, peace and joy as you infect your world with His light.

In His grip because I cannot hold on,

Stuart

**Date:** Thu Mar 8, 2001 7:38 pm

**Subject:** Anchor Man chapter 7

Here's something totally unrelated to the lesson, but it cracks me up. It's from a Snoopy calander my wife bought me: "The rain falls on the just and the unjust, but chiefly on the just, because the unjust steals the just's umbrella."

Remind me Sunday evening to tell you of conversation I had at work with a brother in Christ, regarding his plans for his kids. His oldest is 9 years old. I told him to keep in touch, because I want to see if he's changed his mind - or lost it - ten years from now! I lent him this book and told him to read chapter 7.

Did you identify you personality type? I've been down this type of exercise in the work place several times, but Farrar nails it down to the Foundation Stone, not the annual report. Once we understand how we operate, it's time to figure out how our wife and kids operate. Carole is mostly an Otter. She's on my mind a lot lately and her love for her earthly father strengthens me almost as her love for her heavenly Father.

As dads, it's mostly our job to ensure our children discover how God crafted them - once they know He created them. Did you take the time to identify which of the seven types of intelligence your children (and wife) employ? Brad is fixin' to graduate from high school and has a passion to play music; wants to be in a band, professionally. He is wonderfully talented and gifted in music. I am so thankful that he is drawn to music and lyrics that honor the One who gave these talents to him. But I don't want my son to be a musician. They go hungry. It's not stable work.

Can't support a family. Not my dream for him. But I am doing all I can to encourage his strengths, gird his weaknesses and prayerfully coach him to seek God's will, not mine. It's scary. Is my faith too small, too weak? Oh Lord, your Word says a man plans his way but You guide his steps. Guide my son's steps, Lord Jesus, for I am too small and foolish.

What a powerful rebuttal Farrar provides to the great American myth of "you can be anything you want, as long as you want it bad enough." As the study he cites says "We discovered that people could not become anything they wanted. They could only become what was in harmony with who they were designed to be." Such comfort, knowing that we were designed with a purpose! Those who refute this truth are engaged in what Frank Peretti calls "points of tension" - when a person contradicts themselves in the same thought.

Did you read the story (pgs 151 - 154) out loud to your kids? I'm doing that with my kids tomorrow (Friday) night. They think they are giving me a birthday party. My present will be reading this story to them, knowing it will encourage Joan as she studies sign language, Brad as he launches into adult hood, and Carole as she emerges into a young lady.

But let's not miss Farrar's point about knowing ourselves FIRST. Unless we are straight, reconciled, intimate with our Creator - we are unfit and unqualified to coach, mentor, lead and parent our kids. If you haven't read "Man in the Mirror", you're missing a great tool to help you get beyond the self-deception that plague so many men in this country. We have extra copies of that book (at no charge), so let me know if you need one.

"Teach your children about their God-given bents and strengths and they will be productive citizens of the kingdom of God." That's Farrar's interpretation of Proverbs 22:6 It's a good guide to keep us from living out our failed dreams at our kids' expense.

We will spend more time on the questions this week. I tend to talk too much and we need to hear from you. So be prepared.

**Date:** Thu Mar 15, 2001 12:30 pm

**Subject:** Anchor Man chapter 8

In the midst of so much good in my personal life right now, this chapter breaks my heart. No more clear sign of our country being a post-Christian pagan society than the issue of men who bail out on their public and private commitments. How bitter sweet that a 16-year-old girl addressed her letter "Daddy"! How sweet it is to have a teenager who will sit on mom's lap or hug dad and speak the words "I love you"!

Yes, God can forgive and heal broken hearts caused even by cold-hearted men who abandon their calling rather than abandoning their selfish desires. A man abandoned to Christ need not fear having broken promises in the past. Yes, there will be consequences, but the One who has started a good will finish it. The heartbreak is that men who claim to be in Christ are turning their backs on the One whose back was scourged for our sins. A brother in Christ recently told me he was seriously thinking of filing for divorce (from his second wife), because she didn't love him and "somewhere out there is a woman who will make me happy". Another brother present reminded him that the Bible DOES NOT command a wife to love her husband, it tells her to respect him. And God is not interested in our happiness - He's interested in our obedience.

Have any of us padded an expense account, cheated ever so slightly on taxes, or put ourselves above the traffic law? I have. And I am convinced these "small" sins give Satan the foothold necessary to encroach further until one day we decide we aren't happy and need to go find it somewhere else with someone else. A brave heart subverted into a coward's heart.

Sure there are times and issues when it makes sense and honors God to compromise. The length of my son's hair, whether he studies engineering or music - these type issues don't define God's plan, simply personal desires. How easy we allow this art of compromise to spread to others areas, being able to rationalize it to our deceived selves. There is no better safeguard in times like this than to have a few close brothers in Christ who *not* are distracted by our self-deception and are willing to speak truth when we don't want to hear it. If you do not have an accountability group, talk to me or Hubert. We will help you get off on the right foot.

"I will study the way that is blameless. When shall I attain it? I will walk with integrity of heart within my house; I will

not set before my eyes anything that is base. I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me. Perverseness of heart shall be far from me; I will know nothing of evil." Psalms 101:2-4 NRSV

This is a great reminder of how we should live: with "integrity of heart within my house". Our kids are watching us more closely than we imagine and they see us glance at Hooters billboards and surf slowly past a flesh fest on the TV. May it be true for me and for you, that we walk with integrity of heart within our own houses.

Stuart

**Date:** Tue Mar 20, 2001 10:59 am

**Subject:** Extra Edition!

In case Farrar wasn't making the case strongly enough about the need for Christian fathers to be obedient to the Lord. Words of wisdom from Chuck Colson that are right up our alley.

We missed many of you guys this past Sunday and pray you'll be back with us this Sunday. Read chapter 9, send me any comments you have before Thursday noon.

Stuart

"Doesn't anyone see that this is precisely where today's value-neutral schools and culture have brought us? Amidst the cries for tougher gun laws, surely somebody must see that there's a bigger issue here. The root problem, of course, is sin. We're seeing a lack of individual responsibility and a failure to cultivate conscience. Conscience, remember, is cultivated by the most basic structure of society, the family. Discipline is learned in families, but too many American families have failed. Just look at the statistics. Even in the toughest ghettos, only 10 percent of kids from intact families get into trouble; but 90 percent of those from broken families do. Unless we rebuild families, school shootings may well become the norm. Even in middle-class homes ... kids don't get proper discipline. They don't consider themselves part of a family but rather of a separate teenage culture. And that's a real problem. To build discernment in young people, we have to love them, take an interest in them, teach them that their lives have meaning, and teach them right from wrong. That's how change happens, not by laws from outside but by a change of heart, from the inside." --Charles Colson

**Date:** Thu Mar 22, 2001 9:43 pm

**Subject:** Anchor Man Chapter 9

It's uncommon to hear a preacher or comedian (why do so many preachers tell jokes?) talk about how men are likely to do some simple chore and then drag their wives to look at it. "Look what I did! Ain't that somethin'!" There is something inside a man that makes us want to show off what we have done. Steven talked about this last weekend. Some men hand dead animal heads, some have bowling trophies, etc.

We inherit this behavior from our Father in heaven. Why did He tell the Israel nation to pile up those stones? God likes to show off for His people. It reminds us how great He is, draws us into worship - and gives our Father in heaven pleasure.

Men in our society tend to ignore what God is doing. We are encouraged to for God's hand when we are in distress; when we need something BIG. And just like our kids take us for granted when their lives are going good, so do we tend to ignore the One who gives us that last heartbeat - and the next. Memorial Stones help us remember Who's in charge - and it ain't you or me.

The challenge is to look for God's provision in our everyday life. Tony Evans told a story (which I've probably told you) about his son, Tony Jr. Tony Jr. was working one summer at a dude ranch several hours away from home. The evening before he was to return to Dallas, he took the kids on the last horse ride of the summer. When Tony Jr. was packing up bags for the trip, he realized he had lost his car keys! After frantically looking everywhere - including the trail ride - he called his dad. (So like you and me - going to our Father when we come to the end of ourselves.) Tony Sr. told us he was not eager to drive four hours to give Tony Jr. a copy of the car keys. So he tried to calm him down and talk him back through the day. Then he asked his son if he had prayed about it and asked

God to show him where the keys were. "No, dad - I haven't prayed about the keys." "Why not," Tony Sr. answered, "Don't you think He knows where they are?" Then Tony Sr. prayed with Jr., asking the Lord to show Jr. where the keys were. Tony Sr. told Tony Jr. to retrace his steps and be in prayer. Tony Jr. did everything, lastly getting on the horse and riding the trail on last time - certain he wouldn't find the keys. When he was returning to the barn, the sun was going down so he put his sunglasses in his shirt pocket. He leaned out over his horse to unlatch the gate and his sunglasses fell out of his pocket. When Tony Jr. got down off the horse and reached down into the grass and leaves to retrieve his glasses, he found his keys right there, under some leaves. Coincidence? Not with a sovereign God looking out for His kids! I bet this is one small "memorial stone" that neither Tony will forget.

Let us take time this week, this next month, to look closely at our lives to see what almighty God is doing in and through us. His Word tells us He will do mighty things in our lives - let's live like it!

A final word. The story from the Word that Farrar uses - the Jordan River being stopped. A dear friend of mine thinks it necessary to find a way to explain this, how winds and this natural phenomenon and that possible something else COULD have combined to hold the river up stream for a while. He is a brother in the Lord, an engineer by training. And it grieves my heart for a Christian to find it necessary to "explain" how God does miraculous things. As Nicole C. Mullen sings the words of God from the book of Job so powerfully - "Who told the oceans they only go that far?" - we must keep in mind that our God is an awesome God! Ain't no human mind capable of explaining or understanding Him. No need to reduce the supernatural acts of God to boring earthly coincidence or "act of nature".

God still moves! He does miracles each day. Let us look for His hand and lift up our voice to praise Him! And let our kids know how He has moved and moves today in our lives. He saves us daily, draws us from iniquity into holiness. He is worthy to be praise - He is awesome!

In His grip because His is an awesome grip,

Stuart

**Date:** Thu Mar 29, 2001 12:34 pm

**Subject:** Anchor Man chapter 10

I had trouble understanding where Farrar was going with the chapter title and opening anecdote about the Xerox machine. I had even more trouble when I figured out where he was going, talking about how we communicate with our kids and teach them by our behavior how to behave. This chapter causes me more trouble than the rest of the book. No, I fail to measure up to the Lord's standard in this area more than in the other ones. It ain't the chapter that causes trouble - it's me.

I strongly agree with Farrar's point in this chapter - kids must be taught to behave, fathers must discipline in love. Several years ago a friend of ours had made public his belief that he was called to pastor a church. They had 4 kids, friends with my kids. Every Sunday morning during the service, these kids would be all over the place, making noise and bumping into people. One Sunday after church I approached Joe and told him he needed to influence his kids to behave better. That it was a disgrace to him as a father and an impediment to his becoming a pastor for his kids to be perceived as out of control. Nobody else in the church was willing to confront Joe, although many people complained about his kids. This isn't an anecdote about accountability, although that's an element. Joe was taken aback by my comments. But the very next week, his kids were in their seats and not distracting anyone. Several months later, he was called to be a missionary pastor in Nevada. Today, he pastors a growing church in Abilene. His kids are good kids who know how to behave properly. Their father was the key factor - by his actions and by his willingness to face his own weakness, failure and take corrective action. That's manly behavior. That's godly behavior.

Are you able to tell your kids to imitate you in word, deed, and THOUGHT? Does your life testify that God is your god? Are you teaching your kids - no matter their age - to know Christ and obey His Word? This takes more energy, more deliberate thinking and actions than most men are willing to give. For years, it was so of me. Some times, it is true again for a time.

My biggest failing in this arena has been uncompassionate, unapproachable. I value concise, accurate

communication. Don't care for most of what passes as advertising or social talk. I've not put much effort into interpreting the tears of my wife or daughter. You have heard it said that the Lord is the God of second chances. Praise Him for that! I've been learning to do better in this area and by God's grace I am making progress. It's not comfortable. I don't like hearing the biting tone of my voice come out of my daughter's mouth when she speaks to her mom or brother. Where did she learn that? No mystery. Where does the correction need to come from - not in more words, but in actions? Yep - it all starts in my heart and between my ears. Without "walking in the spirit", I succumb to the flesh. But as Paul wrote in Galatians, if we are faithful to "walk in the spirit" we "shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

Just as the Lord honors a humble and contrite heart, so these attributes make us approachable; enable us to listen in love and understand the tears of our loved ones. A hard heart is difficult to hug, impossible to cuddle with, cannot hear or understand words or tears. As with all areas in our lives, it is true here - as Steven so often says: the heart of the matter is the matter of the heart. How's your relationship with your wife? Your kids? I can accurately tell you the answer to those questions if I know how your relationship is with your God.

Let us walk in a way that brings Him glory and keeps us humble. He will bring our children close and provide for them all that He has planned for them - to prosper them.

In His grip because my hand is unsteady,

**Date:** Thu Apr 5, 2001 1:05 pm

**Subject:** Anchor Man extra!

Our next class meeting, to discuss Chapter 11 will be Sunday, April 22, due to Easter activities. Steve asked me to go on and send emails on Thursday, so here's this week's extra edition.

We have mentioned that with a sovereign God, there ain't no such thing as coincidence. Indeed, all things are His will, though much of what happens causes us confusion. Why bring that issue up? The Friday group I meet with is going through "Man in the Mirror". This week we start chapter 8, titled "Children: How to Avoid Regrets". It starts with the lyrics of the Harry Chapin song that I mentioned Sunday evening: "My child arrive just the other day; he came to the world in the usual way. But there were places to catch and bills to pay; learned to walk while I was away." Further into the chapter, Morley has reprinted the very same letter to Ann Landers that I told you hangs on my office wall! I was unaware of these "coincidences" Sunday night when I mentioned these things.

So I strongly encourage you to re-read chapter 8 of "Man in the Mirror". It will build on the chapter we just discussed and reinforce the godly behavior we are called to. Morley makes the point that I have long held about the Christian life: It is easier to die for a cause than to live for one. He tells a story of a man who died while trying to save his son, when he could have saved himself by abandoning the boy. Most fathers would make the same choice. Yet most fathers do not choose to live each day in a fashion that honors God. Many small compromises add up to a muted living testimony. Our kids are a cause worth the struggle to live a godly life.

With the recent tragic news of the 13-year-old girl who killed herself at Kleb Junior High this week, the 1987 survey Morley refers to is all the more chilling. This data is 24 years old. Our society has not experienced a sea change toward honoring God in the mean time. Satan has had a field day. Yet 24 years ago 18% of teenage girls and 11% of teenage boys who were surveyed admitted they had attempted suicide. 42% of the girls and 25% of the boys had seriously considered suicide. The problem is not guns. The problem is families where God is not honored; where kids grow up not knowing they are created with a purpose by an almighty God who knows them by name and loves them beyond our understanding. What's to keep a kid from peering down the aimless, hopeless future of life without Christ and deciding death is more attractive? The world peddles death, puts an attractive face on it. Too many parents let their kids wear T-shirts with hideous rock stars seducing kids into a dark, slow spiral of sex, drugs, and death. All the while, clueless parents focused on providing "the good life" spend little time talking with their kids and no time teaching them of Christ.

If you don't have "Man in the Mirror" let me know and I'll put a free copy in your hands. If you haven't read it, you've got a couple of weeks off and should get started. I cannot count how many men have told me this book has been used by God to pierce their hearts and shake up their thinking. If you have read the book, re-read chapter 8. See yourself in some of the anecdotes Morley includes, as I have; and be convicted and encouraged to seek refuge in the One who has promised to equip you and me for every good work He calls us to. And let us never forget - you

and I are called to live a life worthy of the sacrifice of the Lamb.

If you are going to be in town Easter weekend, join us for the Men's Fellowship Breakfast on Saturday, April 14. Have you ever given much thought to the suffering of Christ? I hadn't, until a few years ago. The Bible says He was marred more than any other man. We'll examine the evidence, which should put the Easter message in proper perspective.

Do great things with yourself this weekend. Let your life so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

**Date:** Thu Apr 12, 2001 8:10 am

**Subject:** Extra Edition!

Reminder: Our next class meeting, to discuss Chapter 11 (which, by now, you have had plenty of time to read!) will be Sunday, April 22, due to Easter activities. Here's this week's extra edition.

NOT cancelled due to Easter - Men's Fellowship Breakfast on Saturday, April 14. If you attended one of the communion services this past weekend, you have a taste of the topic for this month. Christ paid a supreme price for you and me. How much of His suffering do we comprehend? Are we too casual about the sacrifice of the Lamb of God? Come find out why this attitude is wasted and why Christ is worthy of all we have just for His work on the cross.

Here are a few disconnected quotes that are on my desk just for you guys:

"As a father you have a choice - turn your back or turn the tide!" Bill McCartney, encouraging men to bring their sons and their hearts to Promise Keepers this year. The theme is "Turn the Tide: Living Out An Extreme Faith." The Houston conference will feature Joe White, Ed Cole, and Larry Jackson - who generated more excitement in Dallas last year than anyone since Tony Evans. Check out the Men's Ministry Bulletin Board for more information and to sign-up. (It's about time you located the Men's Ministry bulletin board! In the hall between the education building and the old main building.)

"Children today are tyrants. They contradict their parents, gobble their food and tyrannize their teachers." Socrates, somewhere around 425 B.C. Technology changes but people don't. As I said last week, regarding youthful violence: guns ain't the problem, morally vacant homes are.

"One of the great American myths is that we are a nation of rugged individualists. In truth, we are a nation of social cowards. A major proportion of our energy is expended trying to be like everyone else, cringing in fear of true individuality." James Dobson, from "Hide or Seek", pg 161. God has created us as unique individuals, with His fingerprints all over us. No two alike. It's the fallen world's design for us to turn toward a herd mentality - it makes it so much easier to pump filth through TV and movies, bestow "rights" on perverse behavior and drive so many to take their own lives. Freedom in Christ includes living as He intended from the beginning. Obedient to the law of man, living peaceably as far as we can, fearing not man, fearing God.

Now I wasn't planning on including this next thought, but sometimes the Lord intrudes on one's thought process. Driving to work this morning - which takes me all of 7 minutes - I heard a snippet of Adrian Rodgers. He was preaching on the need we have to obey God, which we cannot do without knowing Him and His Word. Let me paraphrase: "It's like you told me you were tired and run-down all week. Couldn't get out of bed, didn't feel like going to work. No power, no enthusiasm. I ask if you're ill? - no. Have you seen a doctor? - no. What are you eating? Ah. You tell me there's a nice restaurant you eat at most every Sunday - if it's not raining. That's it? You eat once a week at a nice restaurant if it's not raining? No wonder you're run down! Brethren, you cannot live your Christian life hearing the Word of God only at church on Sunday! You've got to eat daily! Can't afford to rely on the preacher to feed you - got to feed yourself! Won't have power, won't have purpose, won't be fruitful, won't be obedient if you are not in the Word, in communion with the Father daily." This is the same thought that we heard at Promise Keepers San Antonio in 1999. I pray you and I are faithful in these "small things" that we would be equipped to useful in the "larger things."

Last random thought: I gave blood yesterday. It frequently reminds me, when I donate blood, that without the shedding of blood, there is no sacrifice for the remission of sin. Christ didn't simply die, He was savagely beaten

and bloodied - that we might have life!

But the other thought that struck me while I was doing the blood thing: they ask lots of questions about your sex life before they take your blood. They want to screen out people who have had "risky" sex, as far back as 1977. The Bible says sex is reserved for a man and his wife. That in this act, the two become "one flesh." That anyone who has sex with a harlot defiles himself and is joined with her. All these screening questions about sex are only required because so many of us do not live in obedience to His Word. And they validate the truth of His Word; pagans doing their best to protect the blood supply have stumbled onto the Truth about sex: two become one and you can pollute yourself by having sex with the wrong person. God is not only all wise, He invented sex ("say "yeah God!", as Steven reminds us) and He invented marriage. All creation testifies to the glory of God - even the blood collection process of a post-Christian country.

Do great things with yourself this weekend. Let your life so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

In His grip,

Stuart

**Date:** Fri Apr 13, 2001 1:05 pm

**Subject:** extra - Extra Edition!

Farrar has given us many snippets from surveys. Here's some current stats that are most interesting: official "social problems" are improving, the real problems are getting worse.

Bill Bennett releases a new Index of Leading Cultural Indicators ... first, the good news: Since the original was published in 1993, violent crime is down 30 percent ... welfare rolls are down 50 percent ... teen suicide is down 20 percent ... now the bad news: Out-of-wedlock births are up 18 percent ... single-parent families are up 13 percent ... the marriage rate is down 9 percent ... the average child now spends 4H hours a day watching TV ... the percentage of Americans who rarely or never read the Bible has surged from 24 percent in 1978 to 41 percent in 2000 ... 18 million Americans have used the antidepressant Prozac since 1987 and sales top \$2.6 billion annually ..

But remember His words: ALL authority under heaven and on Earth has been given Him. Christ the Lord is not surprised nor is His arm shortened. Let us hold fast to the knowledge that He holds everything in His hand - you, me and all these messed up folk that make up the numbers in these surveys.

He is risen, He is risen indeed! Praise the Lord oh my soul, the Lamb of God is risen.

In His grip - and so are you!

Stuart

**Date:** Wed Apr 18, 2001 12:36 pm

**Subject:** Anchor Man Chapter 11

We meet this Sunday! Chapter 11.

I trust each of you had a joyful Easter. What a joy to be in the house of the Lord, to know the price He paid for you and me, and to know that the tomb is empty and He is risen! No greater source of joy, no other person or object is worthy of our devotion and praise.

As we consider the last chapter of this book, let's reflect on the truth that He calls us to be godly fathers and He equips us to fulfill that calling. This chapter focuses on the difficulty of the journey, pointing out how we can succeed.

Farrar mentions an illustration by Bruce Wilkinson involving three chairs. John Maxwell preached this message at a

PK conference I attended in 1995 - let me know if you want to watch the video as Eric did in February. (Carl - you still have a PK video; please bring it with you if you have watched it.) It's hard enough to focus properly on our own walk with Christ: am I bringing all my thoughts into submission to Christ? Does my life shine with the love of Christ? and so on. Too often, we run down before we finish with ourselves, neglecting the spiritual needs of our kids. I agree with Farrar that praying for our kids is the most important work. Yet I often fail to pray for Brad and Carole during my devotion time.

I don't see how a man can properly "see" his children in the proper light unless he has prayed for them. And for himself - to be a godly influence, the spiritual leader. Herein lies the challenge - to continue on, to not grow weary in well doing, to ensure a proper hand off of faith in the risen Lord to the next generation. Yes, almighty God can call your son into a relationship with Christ without your help. But He also tells us that it's our job to train them up in "the fear and admonition of the Lord", to set examples and to be holy. Spiritual negligence is perhaps the biggest problem in Christian America.

Just as Farrar pointed out that a vibrant faith can die very quickly in the links that make a family chain, let us be reminded that God can just as quickly ignite this vibrant faith in the heart of a man who is abandoned to Him - turning the tide in his family. As Bill MacCartney recently said, a father can turn his back or he can turn the tide. And the note to James Dobson from his father shows us that it is often the small things we view as insignificant that the Lord uses to move men mightily. When Brad turned 17 last fall, I wrote him a letter and left it on the dashboard of his car the morning he drove to Dallas to spend some time with friends. I told him how proud Joan and I are of him, that he would stumble but our love would not, neither would the love of Christ. I told him how much I treasure hearing him tell me that he loves me and getting a hug from him every now and then. I don't know the cause-and-effect of this letter and certainly cannot compare it to Dobson's. But I marvel how Brad is maturing in Christ and hear good reports from teachers and see changes in his life. When we are humble and obedient to His Word, He will use our feeblest efforts to His good pleasure.

Farrar finishes this book in good fashion. Reminding us of the value of fasting and prayer. Fasting and prayer. Fasting. And prayer. And he gives us a few good pointers on how to effectively pray for them. And how to fast.

Priorities. That what life boils down. How we talk indicates what we wish were true. How we live demonstrates our actual priorities. Are we being proper stewards of the life God gave us? Are we being faithful to the calling as husband and father that He laid before us? It don't matter what we talk about Sunday evening - what matters is how we live out the rest of our lives. Matthew 5:16 says "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." He didn't say to talk a good talk. Let your DEEDS glorify Him. Let MY deeds give Him praise.

No matter what a man's station in life - President of the United States, or tire changer at Discount Tire - if he is a husband or father he has a holy calling on his life and the opportunity to influence three or four generations to God's glory. No higher calling, no greater cause than to lead our families to be obedient to Christ. Many times in the scriptures the Lamb of God tells us "if you love Me you will keep my commandments." Do we love Him? Let our sons and daughters, wives and grandkids look at our lives and know the answer. If we have to tell them we are godly, we have denied the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we wrap this book up, I thank God for your participation and patience. Let's discuss whether or not to have a social event next Sunday and put your thinking hat on regarding what we might study next and when - summer course or not?

In His grip,

Stuart

**Date:** Mon Apr 23, 2001 12:34 pm

**Subject:** Anchor Man epilog

Here's the list I mentioned last night. I didn't notice at the time the use of the anchor metaphor! This is from the mayor of the small town of Corinth we lived in for 13 years; I served two terms on city council with Shirley. She's quite a warrior for the kingdom.

Pray for Carl Lamb. I got an email from him - his brother, Fred, was killed last Tuesday in a plane crash in Colorado, leaving behind a widow and children. We've been studying the importance of each father and here's a family that is struggling, no doubt, to understand why this has happened to them. A godly man called home at an early age leaves a sound legacy, whereas a godless man who walks away leaves broken hearts. Please pray for Fred Lamb's family to be comforted in the midst of this trauma; to be drawn close to the One who holds them in His grip of grace - even now.

I thank God for each of you and thank you for participating in this study. Let me know if you might be interested in a summer class and if you have a suggestion for a future men's class.

Now unto the One Who sits on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be all power and honor, blessing and glory forever.

In His grip,

Stuart

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Sunday, January 30, 2000 3:36 PM

Subject: Pray for our children and grandchildren

In times like these they need a Savior and an anchor that holds!

Shirley

PRAY . . .

1. That they will be saved early in life (or thank God that they are saved already) Psalm 63:1; II Timothy 3:15
2. That they will develop a hatred for sin. Psalm 97:10
3. That they will be caught when guilty. Psalm 119:71
4. That they will be protected from evil in each area of their lives: spiritual, mental, social and physical. John 17:15
5. That they will have a responsible attitude in all interpersonal relationship. Daniel 6:3
6. That they will respect the authorities in their lives. Rom. 13:1
7. That they will desire right friends and be protected from wrong friends. Proverbs 1:10-11
8. That they will be kept from the wrong mate and will be saved for the right mate. II Cor. 6:14-17
9. That both they and those they will marry will be kept pure until marriage. II Cor. 6:18-20
10. That they will actively resist satan in all circumstances. James 4:7
11. That they will be singlehearted - willing to be sold out to Jesus Christ. Romans 12:1,2
12. That they will be hedged in so they cannot find their way to wrong people or wrong places - and that wrong people will not find them. Job 1:10