

June 19, 2022



# FLORENCE BOULEVARD CHURCH OF CHRIST

## Elders

Steve Clark  
Ken Vanhorn  
Mark Willingham  
Jake VanDyke

## Deacons

Greg Allen  
Justin Beckman  
Kevin Clemons  
Jeffrey Cox  
Mike Davidson  
Kyle Dickson  
Gregg Elrod  
Nate Fulmer  
AJ Gooch  
Jamey Medley  
Ronnie Putnam  
Dave Schmidt  
Mark Vanhorn  
Don Williams

## Minister

Austin Johnson

## Youth Minister

John Birdwell

## Secretary

Sonya Cox

## Fathers, "Keep the Garden"

Brant Hansen, an author, radio host, and podcaster said, "*We men are at our best when we are keepers of the garden.* 'This means we are protectors and defenders and cultivators.' We are at our best when we champion the weak and vulnerable. We are at our best when we use whatever strength we have to safeguard the innocent and provide a place for people to thrive. This is the job Adam was given: keeper of the garden." I think Hansen is on to something.

God's job description for Adam in the garden was simple—work the ground and keep it. Genesis 2:15 says, "*God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*" To understand God's instruction to Adam, let's examine in depth what He said. "Work" is from the Hebrew *abad* meaning to work, cultivate, or serve. Within this word is the literal understanding of working such as tilling the ground for produce and productivity of plant life (Genesis 2:5, 15; 3:23; 4:2, 12). It could also mean working the ground to serve a greater purpose—similar to a servant serving the greater purpose of their superior (Genesis 14:4; 15:13, 14; 25:23; 27:29; 27:40; 29:15, 20, 25, 27, 30; 30:26, 29; 31:6, 41; 49:15). "Keep" comes from the Hebrew *shamar* meaning to keep, watch, or preserve. In Genesis we see the meaning of shepherding over a literal flock, people group, and food store (Genesis 2:15; 4:9; 30:31; 41:35), guarding for protection like the cherubim guarding Eden and God protecting Jacob, "*keeping the way of the Lord*" (18:19; 26:5), and finally "*watch out for*" in reference to keeping something from doing something they shouldn't (Genesis 24:6; 31:24, 29). So what does all this mean?

In the culture of the Scriptures, the vast majority of men were keepers of a garden. If not a literal garden, then they were keepers of something that needed to be kept; i.e. herds of animals, plants, homes, communities of people, children, etc. Almost ingrained into the minds of men was the concept of "keeping." When God used this word to describe Adam's work, He established a model of Biblical manhood and fatherhood that needs to stand the test of time. Since fathers were cultural "keepers" in Bible times, it's possible that they were inherently better fathers than those of us who have grown up in more modern times. The core of their nature was sacrificial work, protection, and preservation. These are God's core principles for fatherhood.

In 21<sup>st</sup> century America, boys grow up playing video games, chasing girls, and being idolized for their youth and vitality. So it's possible that the concepts of recreation, pleasure, and immaturity have been ingrained into their minds from a young age. How does this showcase itself in fathers of today? Fathers are viewed by our culture as jokesters and cut-ups that really don't do much more than break the ice in the room as the mother takes control in serious times. Overall, if the father doesn't find pleasure in some area of parenting then he avoids it as best he can. Is this fatherhood as God designed it?

*Continued on back page*

2502 FLORENCE BOULEVARD

[www.florenceblvd.org](http://www.florenceblvd.org)

PHONE (256) 766-3617

email: [office@florenceblvd.org](mailto:office@florenceblvd.org)

FAX (256) 766-3546

Worship: Sunday 9:00 am & 5:00 pm; Bible Class 10:15 am

Wednesday: 6:30 pm

