KINGDOM MAN SPEECH

FOR

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Hello everyone and good morning! It’s so wonderful to know that so many of you are interested, committed, responsible and dedicated to…. having a delicious breakfast! (**Wait for the laugh**). All jokes aside, being here tells me- and all of us in this room, that you **ARE** curious, interested, and hopefully committed to more than just breakfast. Today we will learn more about what it truly means to be a leader, a role model, and a responsible messenger of God, truth and faith…. in other words…. what it truly means to be a **Kingdom Man**. (**Thank the people who organized the breakfast and took responsibility for it to take place**). Before we begin to really search for the meaning and have an open, frank and productive discussion, there are a few people I would like to thank. This breakfast would not have been possible without the diligence and hard work of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We would also like to thank \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and of course \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for providing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. All of these people, in their own selfless way, demonstrate what it means to serve God through serving his and her fellow man. It is because of their generosity that we have the time and space and forum to explore how each one of us can give back to our families, friends and communities.

I am sure some of you must be wondering, “What is a kingdom man?” I will explain briefly, just as Tony Evans, the founder of this concept and movement, explains in one simple sentence. He states that “A kingdom man is the kind of man that when his feet hit the floor each morning, the devil says, ‘Oh crap, he’s up!!’” He explains that a kingdom man is responsible, reliable, present and motivated. But to know the true nature of a kingdom man is to know the story of the man himself.

It was through his own personal experience of the conflict between his parents and his father’s discovery of the salvation of Jesus Christ when Dr. Evans was just a ten-year-old boy that he is able to have such empathy for families. His steadfast belief in the power of the part men play in family life fueled his research and inspired his calling to spread the wisdom of being a kingdom man. As he observed his father’s salvation and his rehabilitation of his parents’ relationship, Tony Evans heeded his own personal calling and followed his mission and message. It is clear that with intention and purpose and an undying faith each step he took on his path led him to where he is today-a true example of a kingdom man. He became the first African American to graduate with a doctoral degree from the Dallas Theological Seminary. From there he went on to become an associate professor of the Pastoral Ministries Department and to this day he continues to serve on the board of the seminary. He is the former chaplain of the Dallas Cowboys football team and has the distinction of serving as chaplain for the Dallas Mavericks for an unprecedented three decades. For even longer he has been the senior pastor at the Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship Church where, under his watchful eye, that congregation has grown and flourished… from a handful of congregants to thousands. He is a person who truly sets an example, one who knows how to spread the word and how to inspire in terms we can all understand. He has stood right where each of us has been… in conflict, turmoil, doubt, and yes, probably fear, and he has leveraged his connection with God and his love of his fellow man to do what he can to support those around him. That’s what a kingdom man does. A kingdom man doesn’t judge or take sides. He takes **RESPONSIBILITY** and gives his all to his life, his family, his job, and his community.

As a man with an intense interest in and a detailed knowledge of sports and its inner workings and philosophies, Dr. Evans introduces people to the concept of the kingdom man with a simple story, so I will briefly do the same as a way to draw parallels to something to which we can all relate. Picture yourself at a professional football (or basketball) game. In every sport there are three sides. There’s the visiting team…. the local community usually considers them the “bad guys.” There’s the home team… everyone in the crowd **LOVES** them…the rooting and the cheers are the loudest for the home team…. and then there’s the third team. You might be wondering, “What is the third team?” I know some of you may be a little puzzled right now, but the answer is simple. The third team is the officials. The referees…. the guys that hold the rulebooks and make sure those rules are enforced. I don’t have to go any farther than this for you to understand that the kingdom man is on the team with the rulebooks. The don’t take sides. They do not root for the home team at the expense of the visitors. They insure that there is a watchful eye supervising and making sure that what goes on in the field is honest and fair. What our society is missing are the members of that third team. Our homes and schools and communities and churches desperately need that third team that hold the rulebooks…. that maintain the context of authority and guidance. People, especially the young and disenfranchised, need to have solid authority figures that will guide them. That third team of life is where the kingdom man dwells and of course his rulebook is the Bible.

So how does a kingdom man operate? What does he do? How does he interact at home, at school, at work, or in church? Dr. Evans gives an example of an incident he experienced with his own child. He explains, “My son Jonathan is a big guy. In the NFL, he’s taken downs with some of the best players. He can hold his own. But he wasn’t always that big. One time I remember him running up to my office at the church asking me to come down to the gym and watch his five foot three frame dunk the basketball. He had been practicing for months.

Once I got there, Jonathan grabbed the ball, dribbled, and dunked. I offered only abbreviated congratulations. Then I turned to the athletic director and pointedly told him to raise the basket back up to where it belonged. Impatient to grow taller, Jonathan had lowered the goal. “Raise the basket, Jonathan,” I said. “And try again.” He goes on to explain that Jonathan missed the basket, but the lesson to be learned is that there are no shortcuts in life and lowering your standard to meet and achieve a goal is an empty victory.

Lowering a standard does not just affect basketball statistics. The lowering of standards is a warning shot to all of us that if we relax the level of acceptance one time, it becomes twice, and before we know it, life, community, and faith face a slippery slope to ruin. There must be an inner pride- an inner self-respect that we all need to access that does not allow the lowering of standards. As Evans goes on to say, “The impact of a lowered standard leaves its scars no matter what race, income bracket, or community a person is in. The outcomes may be different depending on the location, but they are just as devastating. Promiscuity, emptiness, depression, chronic irresponsibility, family breakup, misuse of finances, divorce, violence, chemical addiction, overeating, indulgence, bankruptcy, low self-esteem, and general aimlessness plague our society as a direct result of the abuse or neglect of biblical manhood.”

Society at all levels must change. There must be a strengthened male presence. As Dr. Evans goes on to say, “…that change will not occur unless men will raise the standard to where God had originally placed it. This … is about raising that standard and defining manhood as God intended it to be. It’s about discovering what it means to be a kingdom man.”

There is a desperate need in our homes, in our schools, in our streets and in our communities, for responsible, committed, dedicated kingdom men to rise up, heed the calling, and take responsibility for why he is here on earth. Life is not a free ride. Lack of solid male leadership, guidance and example causes more than just confusion. As Dr. Evans explains, “God has a kingdom, and God has a book.” It is up to us, as men- as kingdom men, to see that the word and the message in that book is carried out. Remember:

* “Kingdom men represent in time God’s perspective from **eternity.**”
* “The **absence** of Kingdom men is bringing destruction, pain, and anguish throughout our land.”

In an article published by the National Fatherhood Initiative, we learn the following:

* Children in homes where the father is absent are four times more likely to grow up in poverty. In 2011, The US Census Bureau reported that 12% of children in married couple families lived in poverty compared to 44% of children in mother- only families.
* Children born to single mothers show higher levels of aggressive behavior than those born into families where there is a father present.
* Infant mortality rates are 1.8 times higher for infants of single unmarried mothers.

At this point it must be getting more and more clear to you how much kingdom men are needed and what needs to be done in order to “beat the odds.”

Dr. Evans has a mantra and that is Psalm 128: “Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in His ways…. No matter the age, there are many challenges facing men today, but it is up to each one of us to rise above the considerations and doubts we have to see to it that we, the ones we love, as well as our friends and communities, make better lives and futures for ourselves and our children. A kingdom man is “called” to do four things. He is expected to be faithful in his pursuit of those achievements. He is not expected to do everything perfectly, but he is expected to be honest and ask for guidance when needed. He is also expected to give support and a helping hand in return. He is expected to be present, interested and committed to a positive outcome. He is expected to leave the world in a better state than he has found it- after all, isn’t that what a kingdom man would want for himself?

The four things that form the calling of a kingdom man are:

* **Be accountable to God and to other men**. A measure of a kingdom man’s success is not in the material riches he amasses for himself. The kingdom man finds his treasure as his blessings flow **through** him to make a positive impact on his spouse, his children, his community and his church.
* **Bring redemptive leadership**- in other words, strong with regard to the Lord, stable in one’s faith, and secure in the word of the bible. The man’s function in the family is to be that sense of stability and emotional support; to provide a sense of security to one’s wife and a sense of positive authority to one’s children.
* **Be committed to family and community**- as kingdom men we are called to live a life of commitment- to oneself, one’s family, one’s neighbors. Kingdom men must be ready to rebuild family and support transformation at the community level as needed.
* **Be ready to walk in faithfulness**- the kingdom man commits to live a Godly life for himself, his family and future generations.

All of this might seem like a very tall order to some people, but that is the point. Like Dr. Evans son, it serves no one to lower the bar-or the basket in an attempt to aim for mediocrity. Everyone understands that we do not go from nothing to everything in a matter of moments or days. It takes lifetimes to learn to be in touch with one’s inner kingdom man and to let that spirit free. It is in the sincere efforts of each one of us to make the commitment to live life in a new way but we have to learn and build together and support each other as we go along.

As we gather here today I propose that each one of us makes a pledge to live the life of a kingdom man. Let us learn together. Let us be guided by faith in the word of the lord and by the strength I **know** we all possess. Let us set goals that support our families and children, our friends and our neighbors, and if we fail once or twice, let’s give each other the strength we need to succeed as a team. We are all in this together. This is not a job for one man or two. Only as we work together can we accomplish a critical shift in the conditions in which we currently exist. If we save one life, one marriage, one family, one child from a life of crime or poverty, then we have the sign that we are on the right path. With God’s guidance we will learn that anything worthwhile takes time and effort and struggle. Together will be learn and hear the word of the Lord encouraging us to keep going as we all become kingdom men. I am excited to travel this path and I need companions. Please join me as we form a better, safer, more secure world for ourselves and those we love and respect!

Thank you all!!